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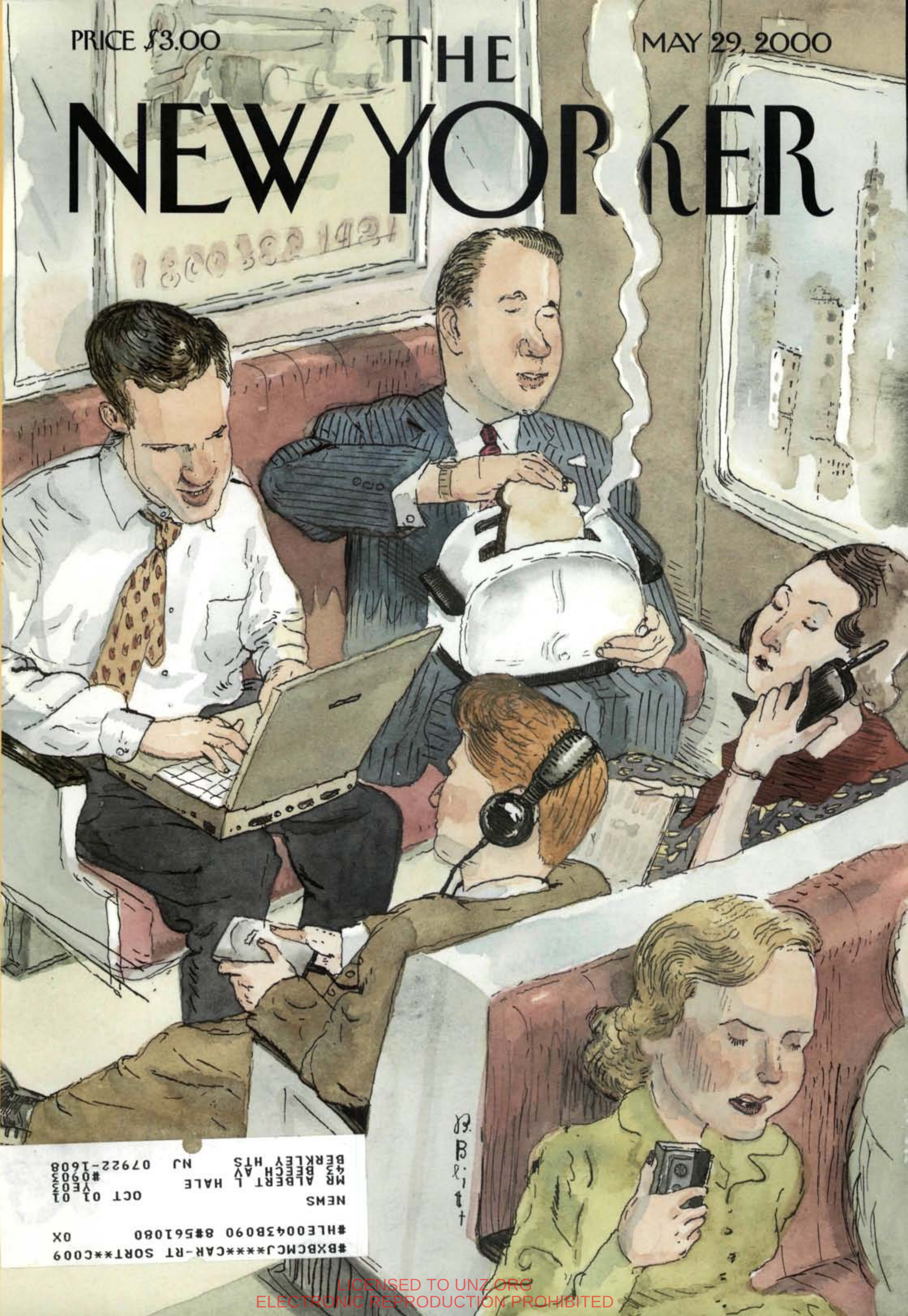
THE NEW YORKER

MAY 29, 2000



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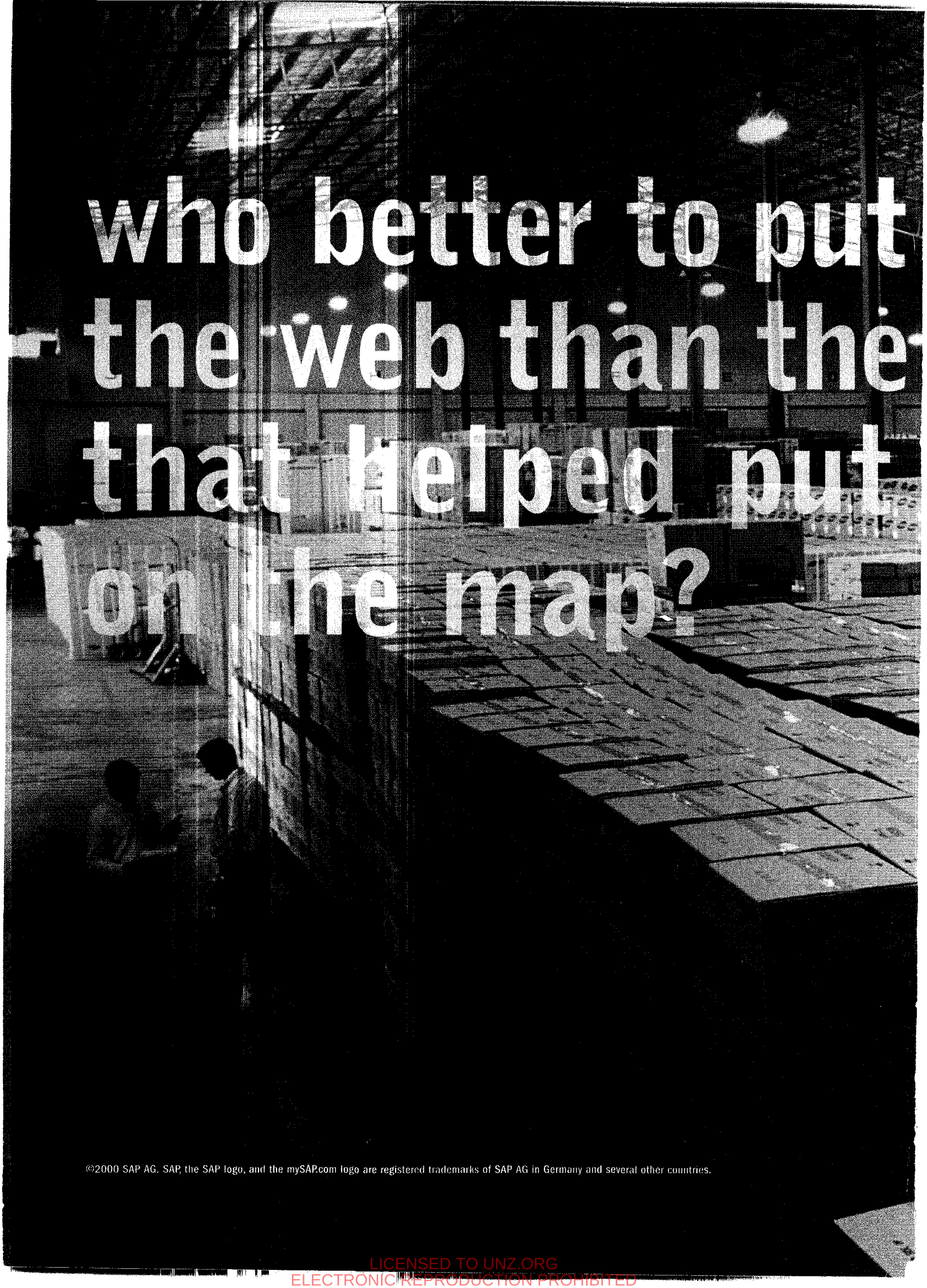
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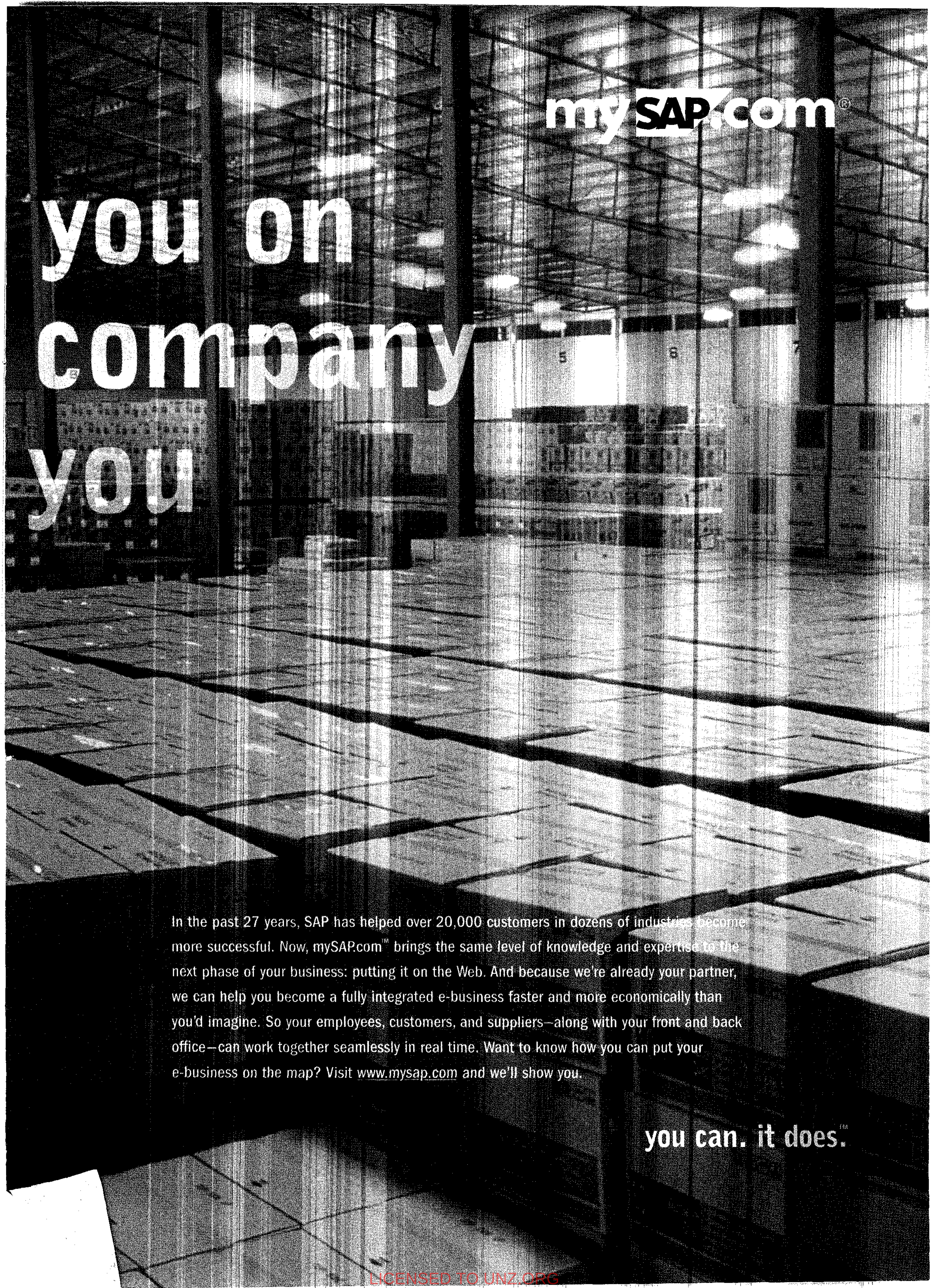

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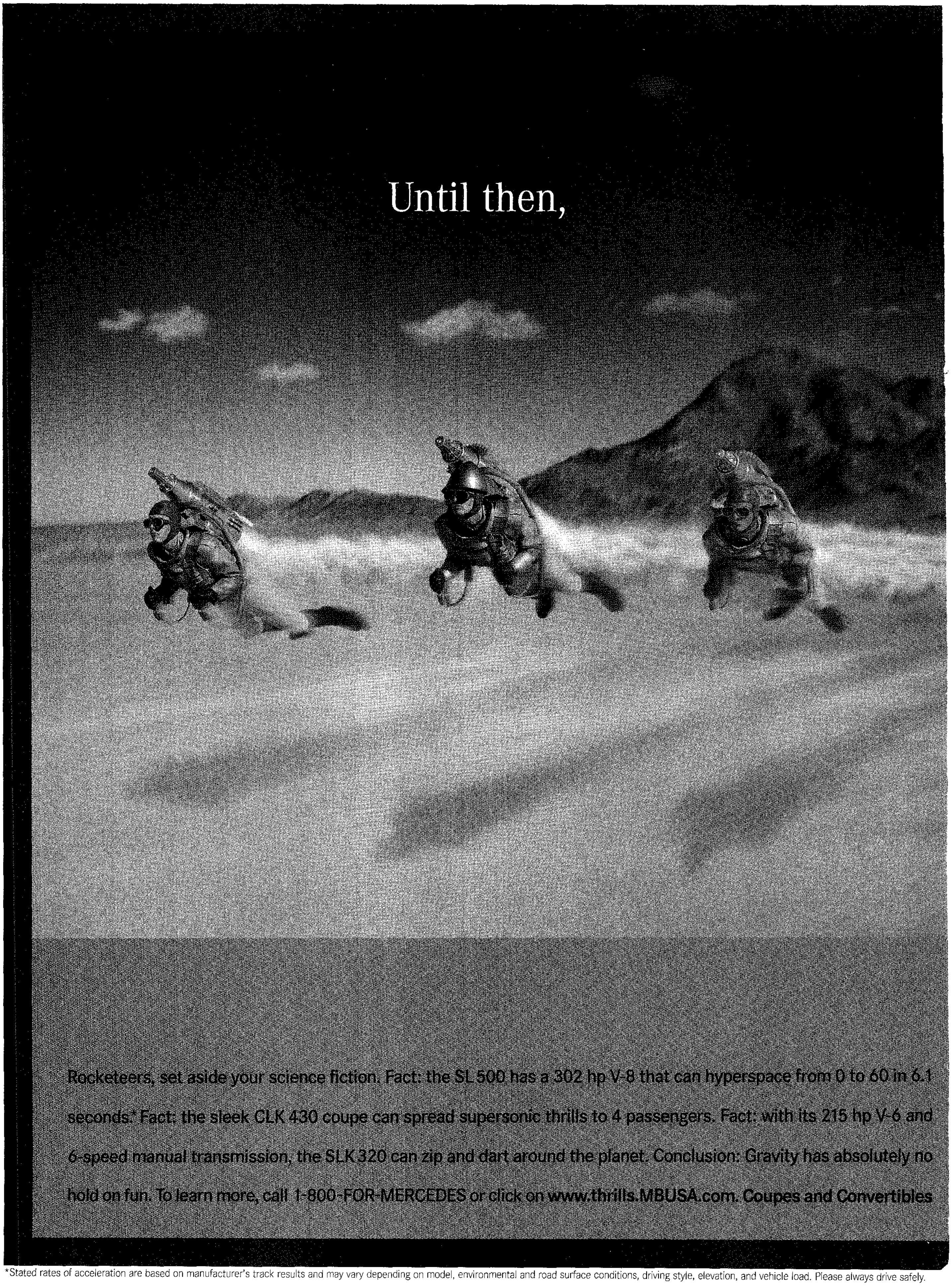

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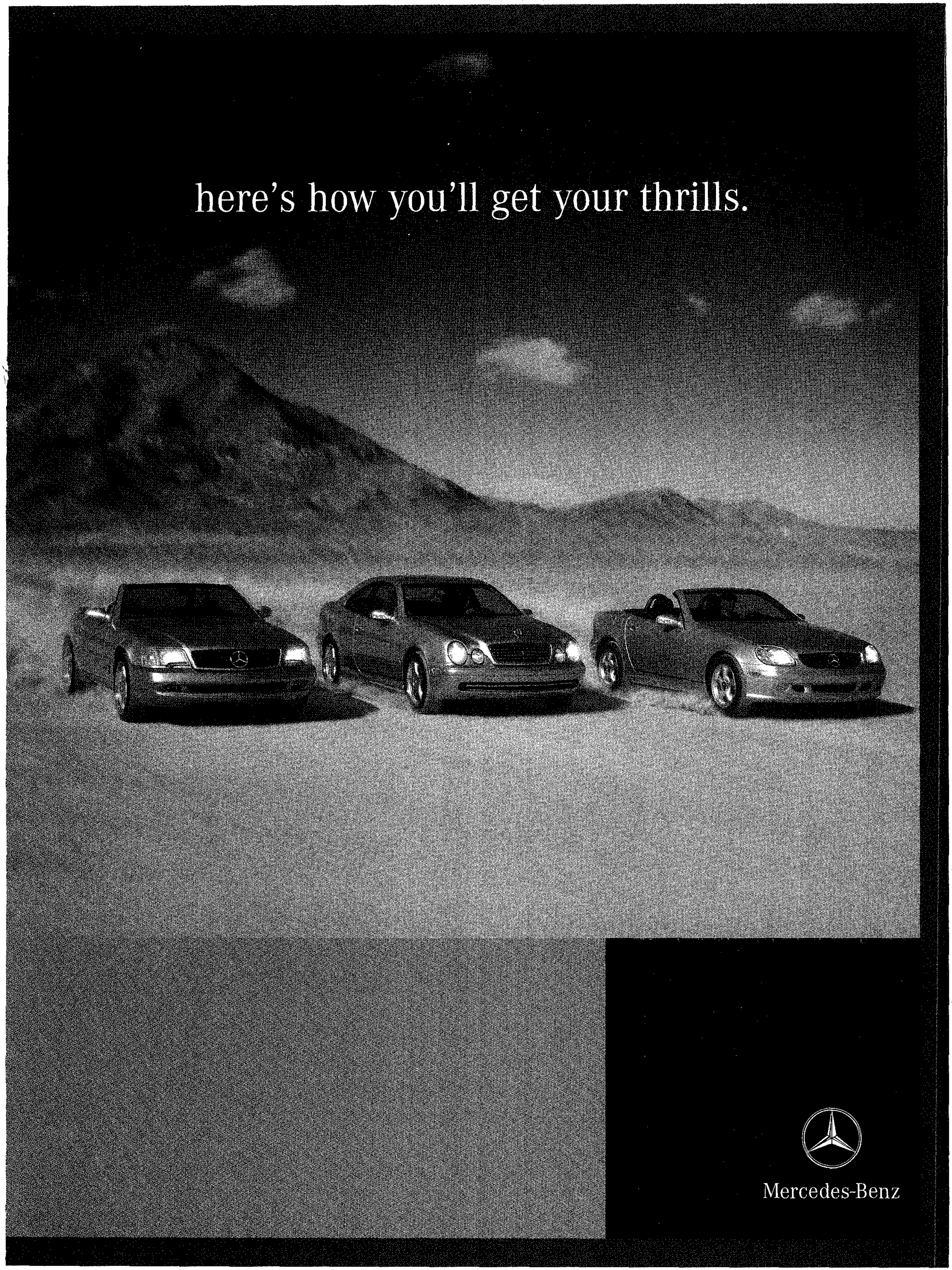
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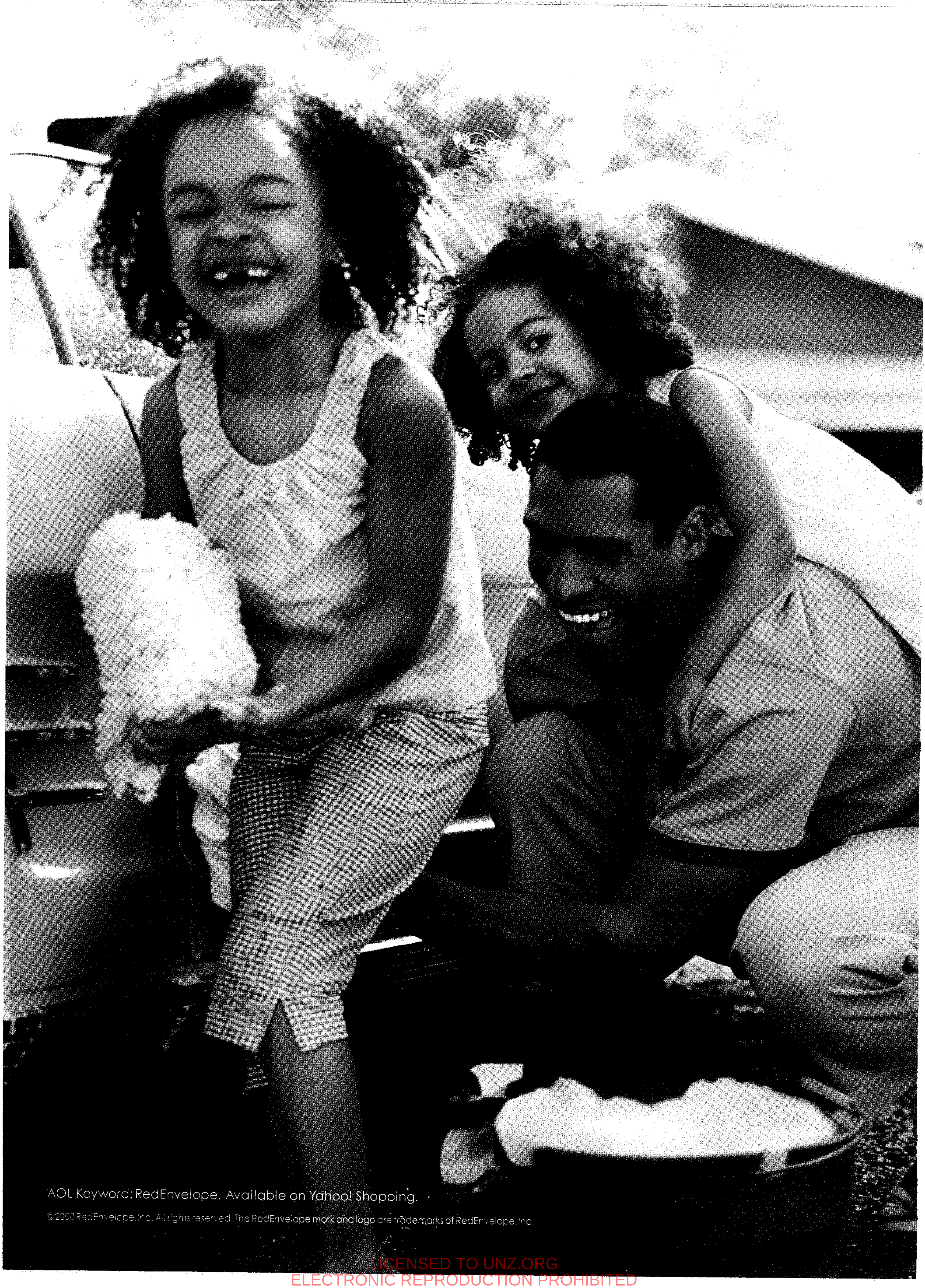
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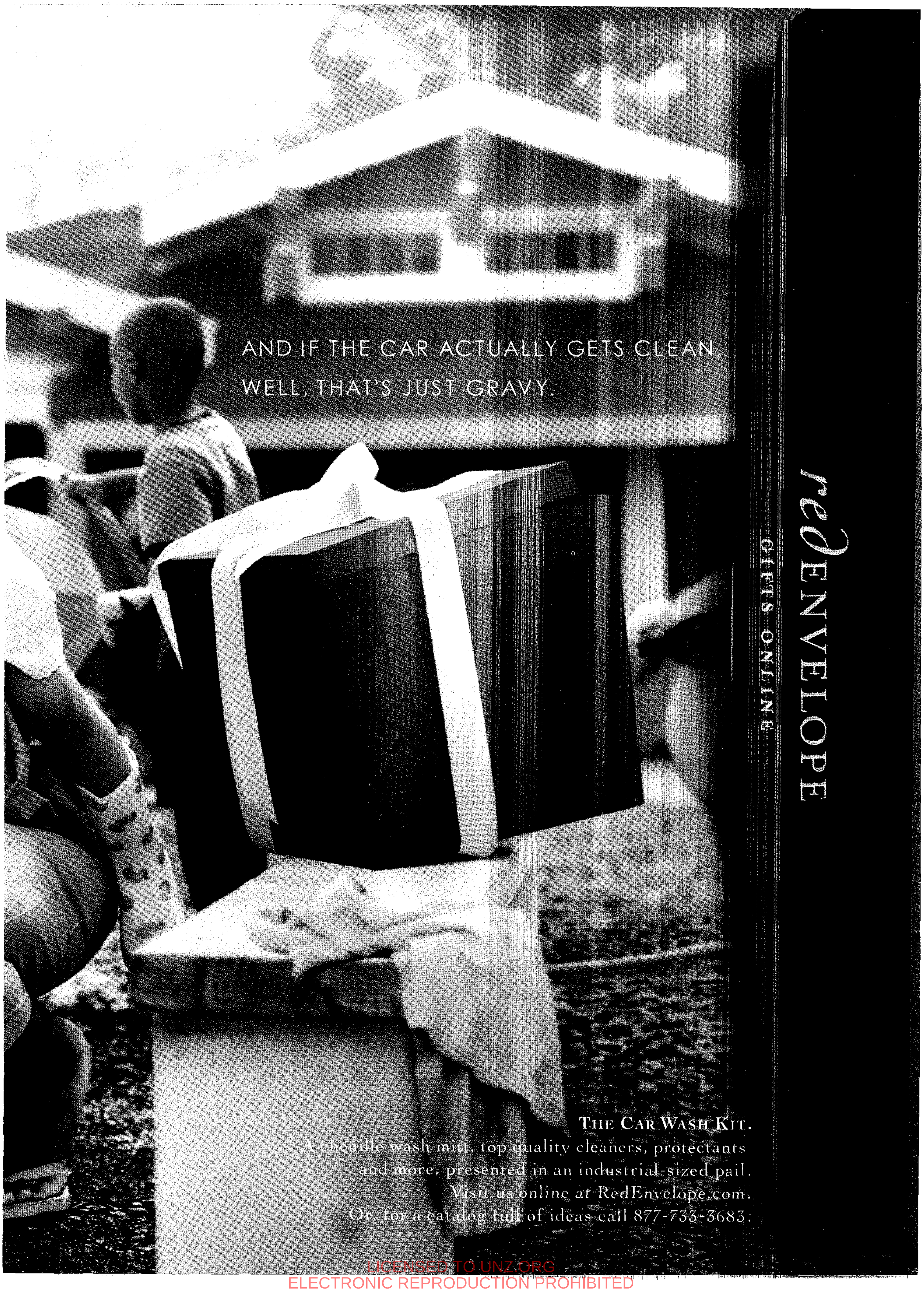
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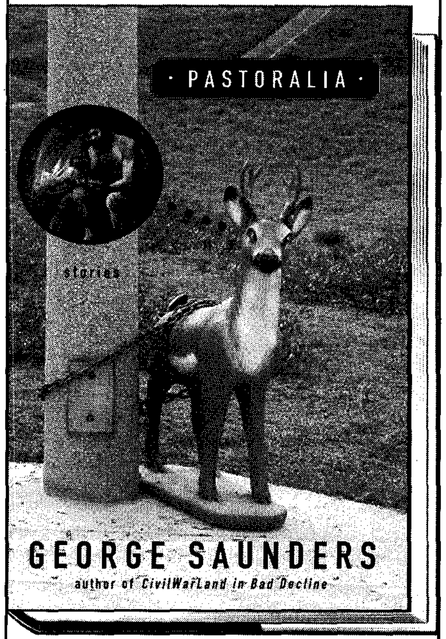

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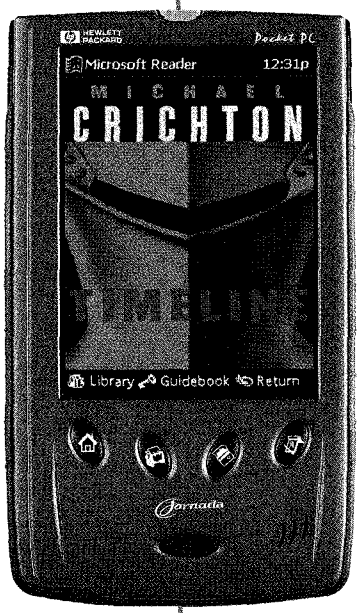

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CONTRIBUTORS

Jerome Groopman ("The Prostate Paradox," p. 52) is the Recanati Professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. His book "Second Opinions: Stories of Intuition and Choice in the Changing World of Medicine" came out last winter.

Malcolm Gladwell ("The New-Boy Network," p. 68) published his first book, "The Tipping Point," in March. An archive of his articles is available at gladwell.com.

Ben Greenman (The Talk of the Town, p. 48; Shouts & Murmurs, p. 67; Web Sightings, p. 137) edits the Goings on About Town section.

Michael Specter ("Search and Deploy," p. 88) is a staff writer based in Rome.

Barry Blitt (Cover) is an artist and illustrator whose work has appeared in the magazine since 1992.

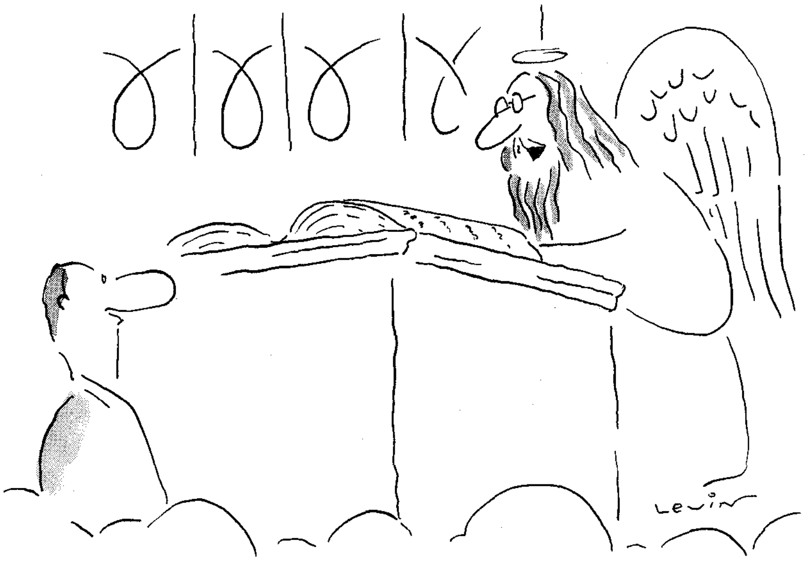
Jane Kramer ("Liberty, Equality, Sorority," p. 112) writes the Letter from Europe for the magazine. Her latest book is "The Politics of Memory," a collection of essays on Germany.

Larissa MacFarquhar ("The Gilder Effect," p. 102) is a staff writer.

John Updike (Fiction, p. 124) is a regular contributor of fiction and literary criticism. He is the author of, most recently, "More Matter," a collection of essays, and the novel "Gertrude and Claudius."

Michael Sragow (Easel, p. 106) has contributed to the magazine since 1989.

Stan Mack (The Back Page, p. 144) created the cartoon strip "Real Life Funnies," which ran in the *Village Voice*. His books include "The Story of the Jews: A 4,000-Year Adventure." ♦



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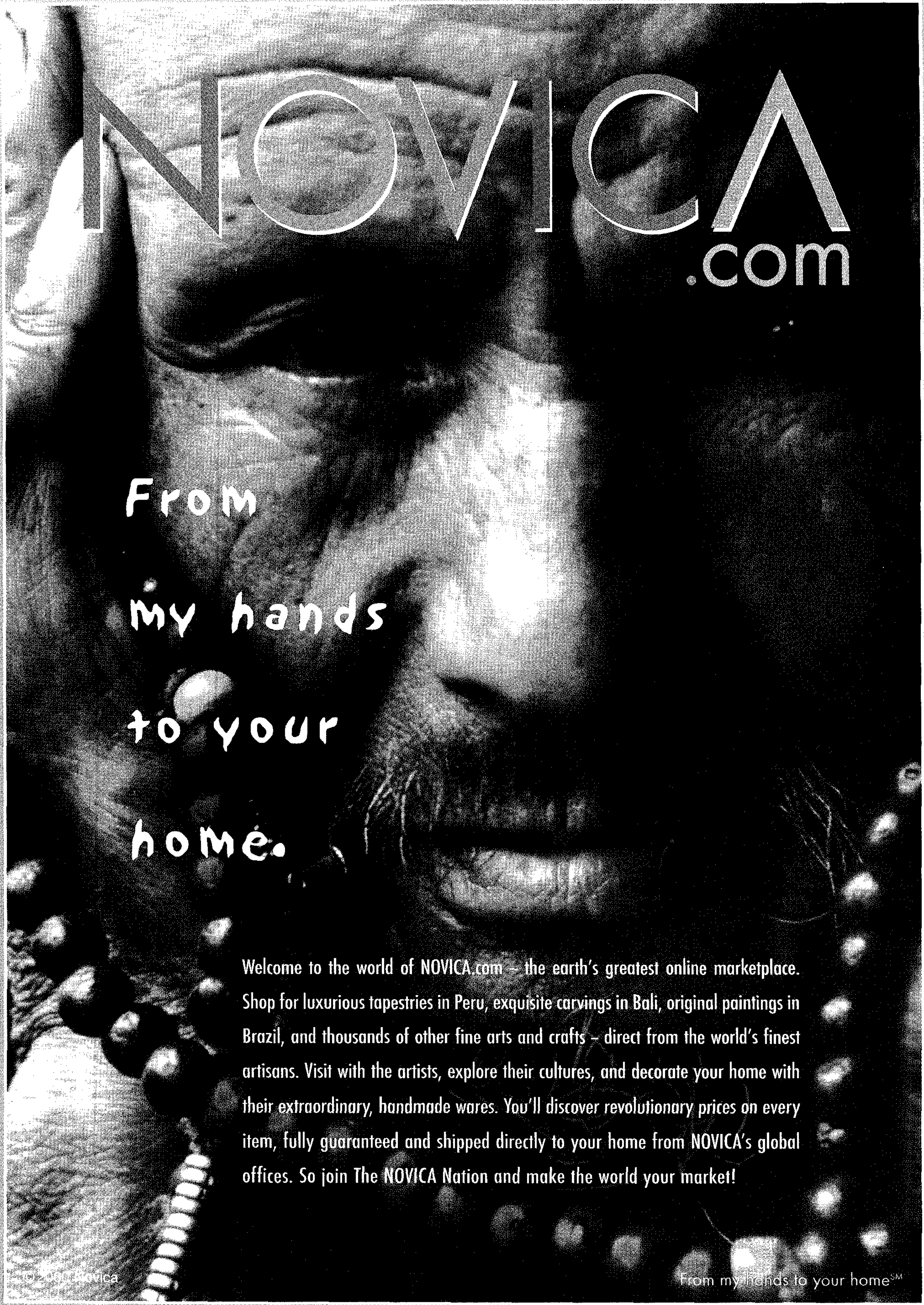
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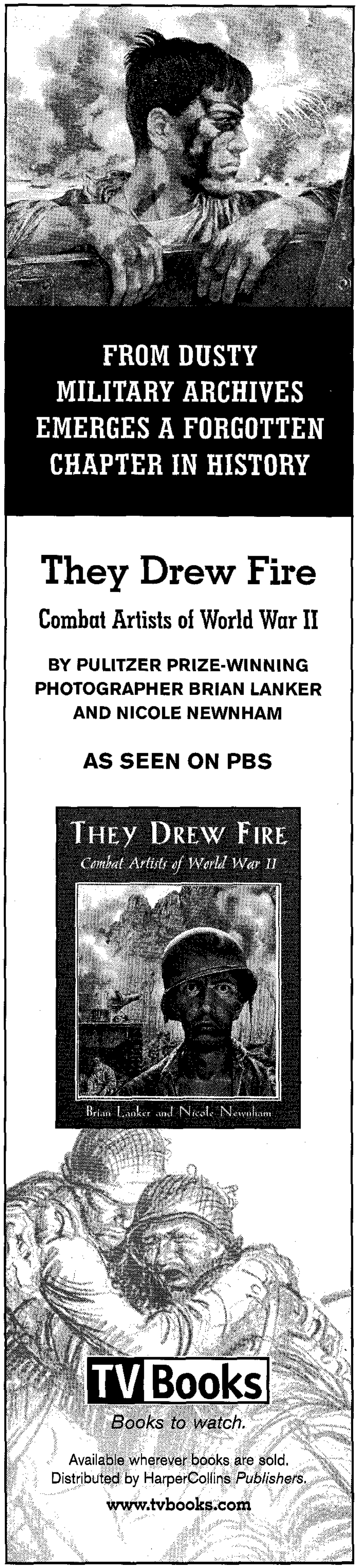
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CHAPTER IN HISTORY

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PHOTOGRAPHER BRIAN LANKER
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THE MAIL

THE COUCH V. THE PRESCRIPTION

Joan Acocella splits the field of psychiatry in two: good psychodynamic understanding versus insensitive biomedical pill-dispensing, the latter ascendant (Books, "The Empty Couch," May 8th). But her support of psychotherapy doesn't require her anti-medication stance. Many, if not most, psychodynamic psychiatrists prescribe medications, and good psychopharmacologists listen and talk to their patients. The real crisis, which Acocella mentions, is not a struggle between couch and white coat but, rather, the evisceration of psychiatric (and other medical) treatment and training by managed care.

John C. Markowitz, M.D.
Director, Psychotherapy Clinic
Payne Whitney Clinic
New York, N.Y.

As a card-carrying chronic depressive and member of the S.S.R.I. set, I appreciated Ms. Acocella's "The Empty Couch." The article does, however, overlook a primary premise of medical treatment: the risk-to-benefit ratio. I promise—being able to function on a daily basis outweighs my long-term fears about potential side effects. I'd rather not have to take the meds, but I also want to be able to work, raise my children, and live joyfully. Any of us with this disease would love to think that endlessly exploring our psyches and pondering the complexity of the human condition would be enough to solve depression, but it's not necessarily so. Treatment involves trade-offs, and being well informed is part of my responsibility—even Tylenol can kill you if used inappropriately, but it clearly has its place.

Roxann Kontzer
San Jose, Calif.

ROTH AND HIS READERS

In David Remnick's "Into the Clear" (Profiles, May 8th), Philip Roth claims that the literary mind-set—the mind-set of one who reads books seriously—is dying, or is indeed dead, in America. But since the novel's inception as a literary form, how much of Western society has really engaged it seriously? In the eighteenth century, most people were illiterate, without an opinion on any work of literature (the possible exception being the Bible). Literacy has become more widespread, but most people, left to their own devices, would rather read a potboiler than Proust. The change has been not in the number of serious readers but in the percentage they represent of all readers.

Nathaniel Panek
Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Mr. Roth was able to put into words that which disappointed me most about my college career as an English major: people who read with a "subtlety that is misplaced" and the death of reading. The academic world made reading a burden. My peers seemed to have a need to diagnose and categorize literature (and sometimes authors); they were content to have a formulaic understanding of the significance of names and symbols, whereas I was searching for those who wanted not only to converse about literature but with it. Since graduation, however, the academic world has become a blessing: I've worked at a boarding school where the students, because they don't have televisions in their rooms, are more likely to delve into literature for entertainment and to satisfy their cravings to broaden their horizons. My students' conversations have given me a new hope for the future of reading.

Maggie Norian
Interlochen, Mich.

•

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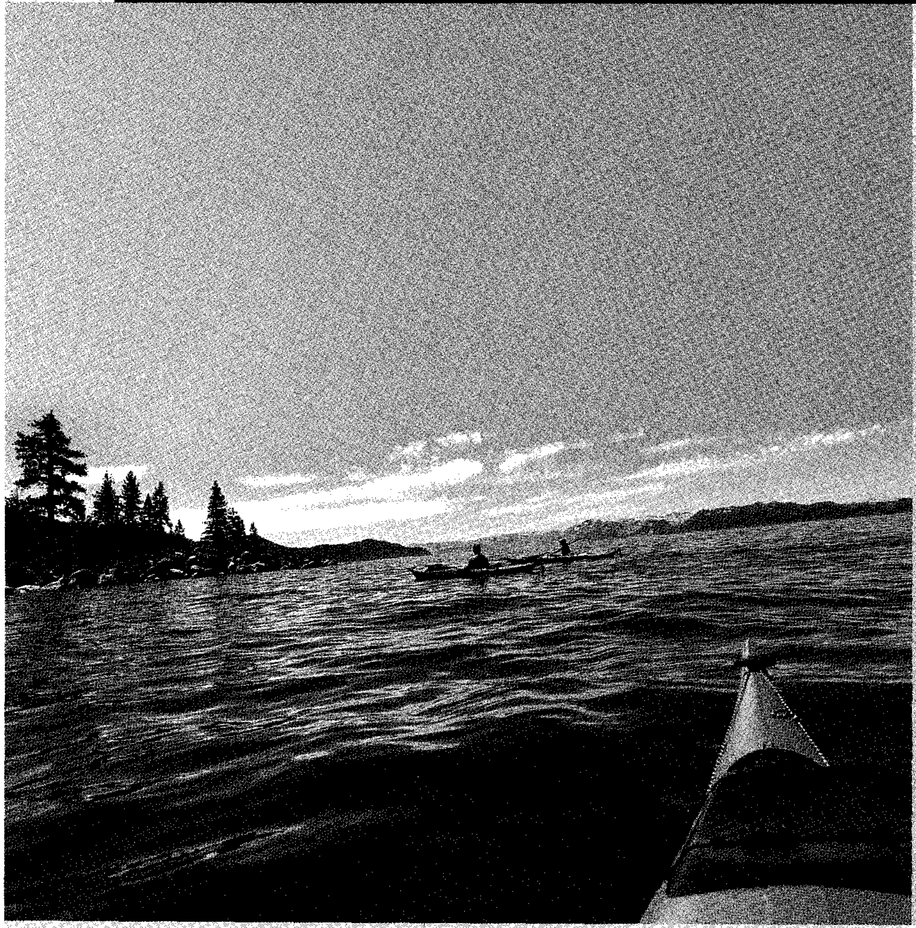

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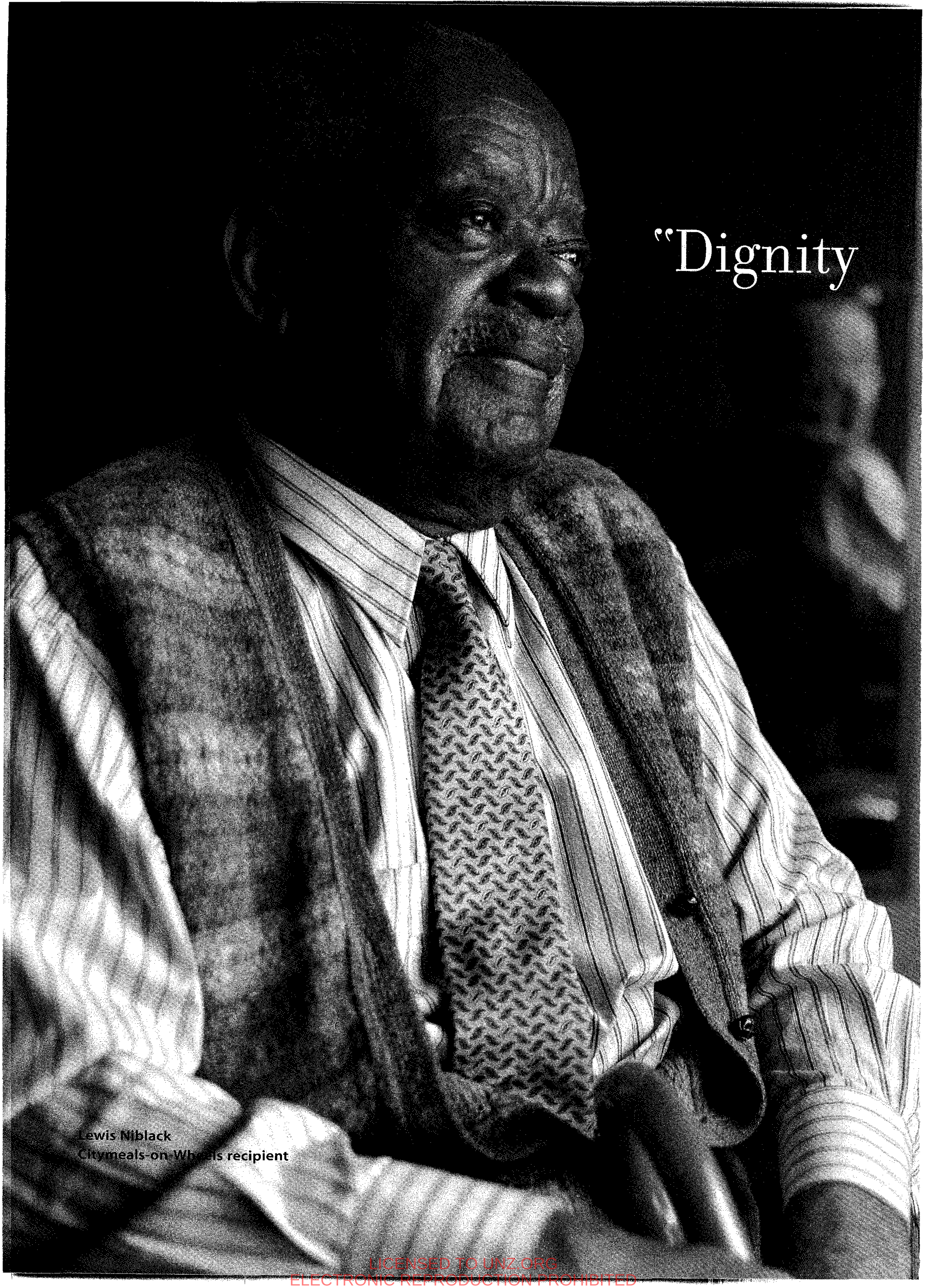

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE
OPENINGS & PREVIEWS

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ANONYMOUS
Chip Zien has the lead in a comedy by Glen Merzer, about a cloistered novelist whose life is turned upside-down when he takes a job in advertising. In previews. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200.)

CURRENT EVENTS
A liberal California senatorial candidate returns to his Connecticut home, in a new drama by the actor and playwright David Marshall Grant ("Snakebit"). In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

THE GINGER MAN
J. P. Donleavy's stage adaptation of his 1955 novel, staged by Ireland's Dublin Theatre Company. In previews. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 581-4125.)

HOTEL SUITE
Helen Carey, Randy Graff, Leigh Lawson, and Ron Orbach star in an evening of one-acts taken from Neil Simon's three "Suite" plays. John Tillinger is the director. In previews. (Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. 307-4100.)

OPENED RECENTLY

AIDA
Disney's new musical—five years in the making and a product of Pharaonic expense—is, if not perfect, a lively, polished entertainment with bursts of joyful flamboyance worthy of its composer, Elton John. The two female leads—Heather Headley, as Aida, and Sherie René Scott, as Amneris—shine in their different ways, and Bob Crowley's brilliant sets give the show both visual dazzle and emotional resonance. Directed by Robert Falls. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/10/00.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4747.)

AMADEUS
From London, a revival of Peter Shaffer's drama, starring Michael Sheen as Mozart and David Suchet as Salieri. Sir Peter Hall is the director. (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE BOMB-ITTY OF ERRORS
In this exuberant take on "The Comedy of Errors," the action has been shifted to a hip-hop realm, and the basic ideas remain the same, but the four extravagantly talented writer-actors (who play all of the parts) make it seem altogether new. (45 Bleecker, 45 Bleecker St., at Lafayette St. 307-4100.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

COPENHAGEN
In Michael Frayn's play, which speculates on the controversial 1941 reunion of the two giants of quantum mechanics—the physicists Niels Bohr (Philip Bosco) and Werner Heisenberg (Michael Cumpsty)—the game of not knowing is elevated to an organizing principle. It is so meticulous, so admirable, and so grave that you want to tousle its well-kempt appearance and tell it to lighten up. Nevertheless, the director, Michael Blakemore, manages to make dynamic and suggestive an evening that consists of three actors (Blair Brown plays Margrethe Bohr) and three chairs. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE DESIGNATED MOURNER
Wallace Shawn, Deborah Eisenberg, and Larry Pine make up the cast in Mr. Shawn's 1996 play, directed by André Gregory. (5/15/00) (21 South William Street. 532-8887.)

THE DIRECTOR
The playwright Nancy Hasty asks whether acting (which is essentially lying) can reveal deeper truth. It's a smart play, and, though it's not entirely satisfying intellectually, John Shea's brilliant performance as the director almost makes it seem so. (Arclight, 152 W. 71st St. 279-4200.)

DIRTY BLONDE
Claudia Shear and James Lapine's cunningly written, raffish play about Mae West, which was staged earlier this year at New York Theatre Workshop, has moved to Broadway. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

ENSEMBLE STUDIO THEATRE
Series B in this year's six-week marathon of one-acts continues through May 28, with work by such playwrights as Edward Allan Baker, David Ives, Peter Maloney, and Stuart Spencer. The marathon continues through June 11. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-4982.)

ENTER THE GUARDSMAN
A musical romance based on Ferenc Molnar's "The Guardsman," starring Robert Cuccioli, Marla Schaffel, and Mark Jacoby. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 239-6200.)

THE GREEN BIRD
The director Julie Taymor brings Carlo Gozzi's fairy tale to the stage with puppets, masks, and live performers. The music is by Elliot Goldenthal. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

HYPATIA
In Mac Wellman's latest play, the fifth-century mathematician and philosopher travels through time bearing gifts. (SoHo Rep, 46 Walker St. 334-0962. Closes June 3.)

JACKIE MASON: MUCH ADO ABOUT EVERYTHING
The comic is back on Broadway. (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR
This misguided Broadway revival of Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's 1971 musical version of the Saviour's last days on earth starts out by asking the tantalizing question "What's the buzz?" but never delivers a theatrically satisfying answer. Still, with its archaic whiff of right-wing outrage and singable seventies-rock score, it's fun for nostalgia's sake. Gale Edwards is the director. (Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

JITNEY
August Wilson's first play, set in 1977, about the lives of a group of Pittsburgh gypsy-cab drivers. (Second Stage, 307 W. 43rd St. 246-4422.)

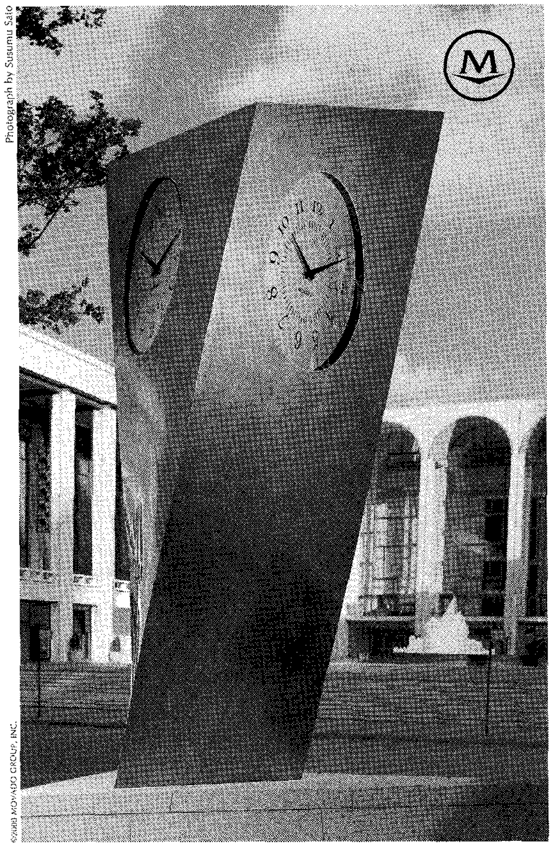
KISS ME, KATE
With all its admirable expertise and its various delights, this production of the Cole Porter musical is oddly earthbound: it comes down to the vexing issue of chemistry. The leads, Marin Mazzie and Brian Stokes Mitchell, are expert players, but they are not—in the true meaning of the words—star performers. (11/29/99) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

THE LARAMIE PROJECT
A drama about the murder of gay-hate victim Matthew Shepard, written and directed by Moisés Kaufman ("Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde"). (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100.)

LOUISE BOURGEOIS: I DO, I UNDO, I REDO
A stage portrait of the sculptor, written and performed by the Brazilian actress Denise Stoklos, who drew her text solely from the artist's words. Ms. Bourgeois designed the set. May 25-27 at 8 and May 28 at 3:30 and 8. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

LUCRECE
From the Willow Cabin Theatre Company, Thornton Wilder's 1932 translation of "Le Viol de Lucrece," by André Obey. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 886-1889. Closes June 4.)

A MOON FOR THE MISBEGOTTEN
A solid and satisfying revival of Eugene O'Neill's 1943 drama. Gabriel Byrne's performance, especially, as James Tyrone, an alcoholic actor who returns to his Connecticut farm from New York to unburden himself in the arms of the earth mother Josie (Cherry Jones), is something to see. Daniel Sullivan directed. (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)



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PUSHING THE ARTFORM

LINCOLN CENTER: MAY - JUNE 2000

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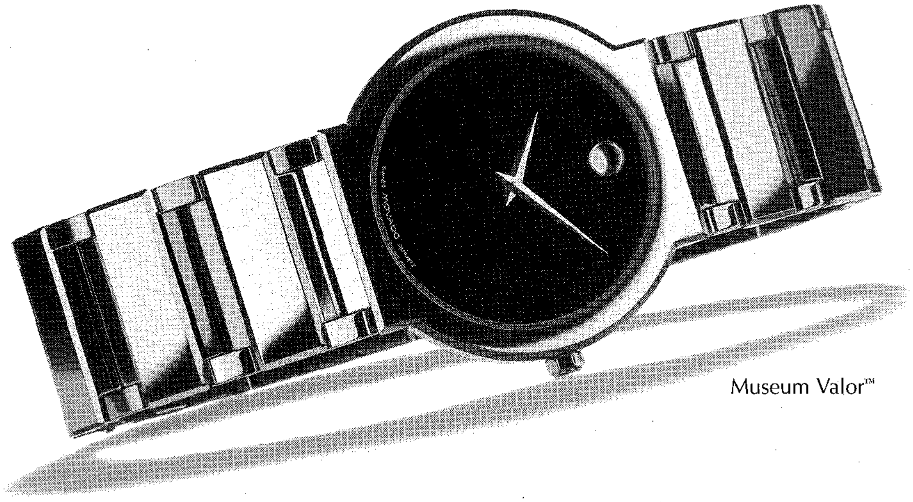

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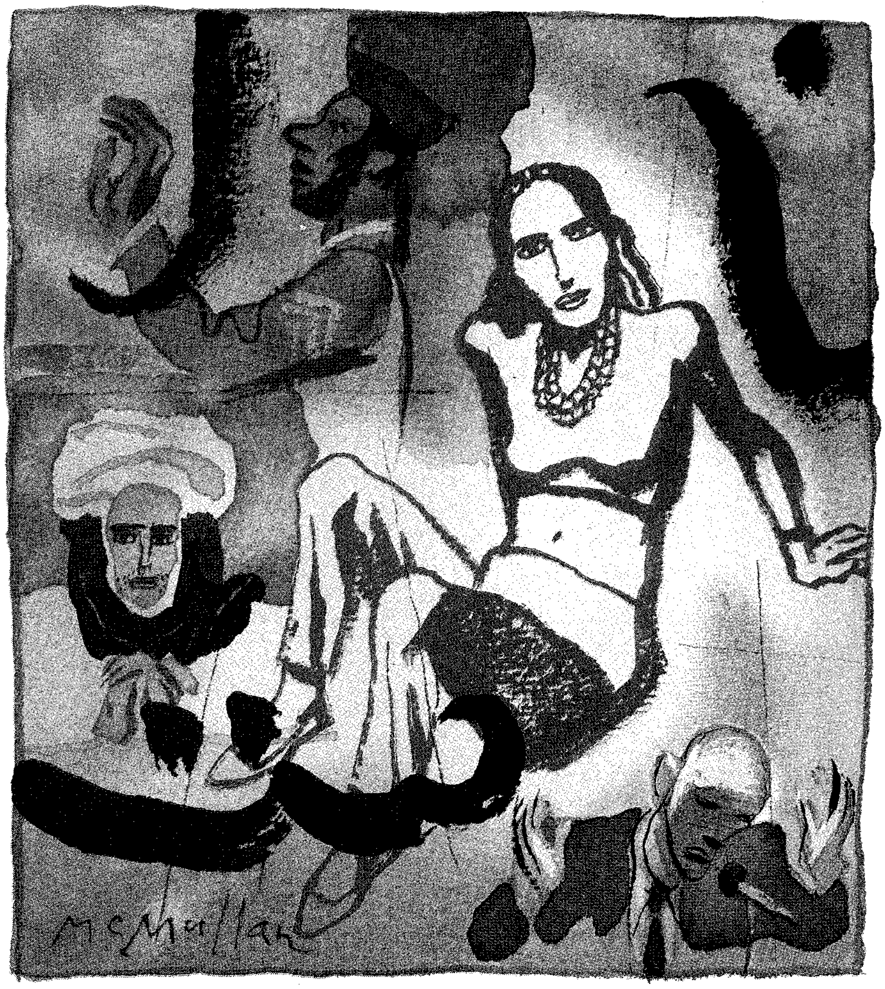

Mac Wellman's "Hypatia," staged by the Ridge Theatre and the SoHo Rep.

JAMES MCMULLAN

THE MUSIC MAN
The first thing that has to be said about this delightful revival of Meredith Willson's 1957 musical, which is under the direction of Susan Stroman, is that it has magnificently solved the Robert Preston Problem in the person of Craig Bierko, who is making his Broadway début in the role of Professor Harold Hill—the role that Preston, of course, immortalized in the original show and in the 1962 movie. Bierko talks and moves and sings with great confidence and charm, and he has the weight and presence on the stage that we associate with male musical stars of several decades ago. Bierko and Rebecca Luker, as Marion, the librarian, make a terrific couple, and Luker's sweet, warbly voice is just right for the era of parlor songs, in which the musical is set. The show hits us with the simplicity and seamlessness of a perfect fairy tale, and it puts music in its proper place—right up there with all the other miracles of life. (5/22/00) (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

OUR LADY OF SLIGO
Sinéad Cusack has the leading role in Sebastian Barry's latest drama, under the direction of Max Stafford-Clark. (5/8/00) (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737. Closes June 4.)

PROOF
Mary-Louise Parker stars in a drama by David Auburn, about an enigmatic woman, her genius father, and a mysterious math proof. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

THE REAL THING
Before the young British playwright Patrick Marber's drama about the excruciating machinations of coupledom, "Closer" (1997), there was this one by the seasoned British playwright Tom Stoppard, in 1984; in comparison, Stoppard's take seems surprisingly innocent. But revived here with an excellent cast (especially Stephen Dillane) and subtle direction by David Leveaux, the elder playwright's most accessible work remains the wittiest, sharpest look at that twisted thing called love to come around in decades. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

THE RIDE DOWN MT. MORGAN
"Why have I been condemned?" the aptly named bigamist Lyman Felt (Patrick Stewart) asks, rather whinily, toward the end of Arthur Miller's latest play, an examination of the seeming impossibility of fidelity, or, at least, lifelong marriage. And you trust that Lyman is truly in the dark about how he could be convicted of having love for two women—the childlike but uptight and aging Wasp he first married (the wonderful Frances Conroy) and a sexy, sophisticated, but oblivious young Jew (Katy Selverstone). The problem with Miller's project is that his lying Lyman is no longer in love with his first wife at all, and he seems to have only lust for the second. In the end, it makes a really good case for divorce. David Esbjornson directed. (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY
The troupe wraps up a three-week residency at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. May 24-27 at 7:30: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (BAM's Harvey Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 718-636-4100.)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
John Travolta is not easy to replace, nor are the ashes of disco fever likely to reignite, as this show, based on the 1977 movie, demonstrates. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

SMALL CRAFT WARNINGS
An encore revival by the Worth Street Theatre of their 1999 staging of the Tennessee Williams play. David Greenspan leads the cast. (Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. 532-8887.)

SWING!
No plot, just a hot band, Olympic-class dancers, and major panties—this show, a tribute to swing and its dance counterpart, the Lindy (mother of the jitterbug), lives up to its name. It swings. Directed and choreographed by Lynne Taylor-Corbett. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

TALLER THAN A DWARF
From the pen of Elaine May, a new comedy starring Matthew Broderick and Parker Posey and directed by Alan Arkin. (Longacre, 220 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

TRUE WEST
A sensational revival of Sam Shepard's 1980 play, directed by Matthew Warchus. It's a droll tall tale of sibling rivalry, in which an intrusive, beer-swilling outlaw named Lee and his brother, Austin, a put-upon Ivy League screenwriter, face off in their vacationing mother's tidy modern kitchen. John C. Reilly's roaring, as Lee, and Philip Seymour Hoffman's repressed hostility, as Austin, make for a wonderful contrast and a satisfyingly equal battle of wills, but when the actors switch roles (every few performances), Hoffman's derelict eyes, slurred sea-dog voice, and preternatural comic skills make the contest entertaining but lopsided. (3/27/00) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

TWO-HEADED
A tragicomedy by Julie Jensen, set on the Utah frontier in the nineteenth century. (Women's Project Theatre, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200. Closes May 28.)

UNCLE VANYA
The director Michael Mayer's thrilling production of Chekhov's coruscating play, featuring Derek Jacobi, Roger Rees, Brian Murray, and Laura Linney. Mike Poulton's superb translation is at once crisp, witty, and actable, and the vastness of the characters' loss and the folly of their capacity for denial come sensationally into focus. (5/8/00) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-1300.)

WAITING IN THE WINGS
In the best of Noël Coward's postwar plays, old gallant theatricals duke it out in a retirement home, where they fire off some terrific one-liners. Although the play itself is somewhat creaky, the pros who bring it to life here aren't. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE
In Eric Bogosian's new one-man performance, his first in six years, he portrays the usual lineup of self-deluded characters and armchair terrorists, who throw emotionally destructive grenades—which sometimes blow up in their faces while also damaging everyone around them. Bogosian's eye is still sharp; what he sees, he sees clearly. But he doesn't seem to see as much as he used to. Many of his observations on the American way of life seem a little dated, and too much of the coffee he's serving in this show tastes reheated. (5/22/00) (Jane Street Theatre, Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. 239-6200.)

WHEN THEY SPEAK OF RITA
Daisy B. Foote's drama, about a discontented housewife in rural New Hampshire. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052. Closes June 4.)

THE WILD PARTY
Joseph Moncure March's Jazz Age poem is the basis for Michael John LaChiusa and George C. Wolfe's new musical, starring Mandy Patinkin, Eartha Kitt, and Toni Collette. Mr. Wolfe is the director. (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

ANNIE GET YOUR GUN
Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST
Lunt-Fontanne, 205 W. 46th St. 307-4747.

BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES
Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370.

CABARET
Studio 54, at 254 W. 54th St. 239-6200.

CATS
Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.

CHICAGO
Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

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Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.

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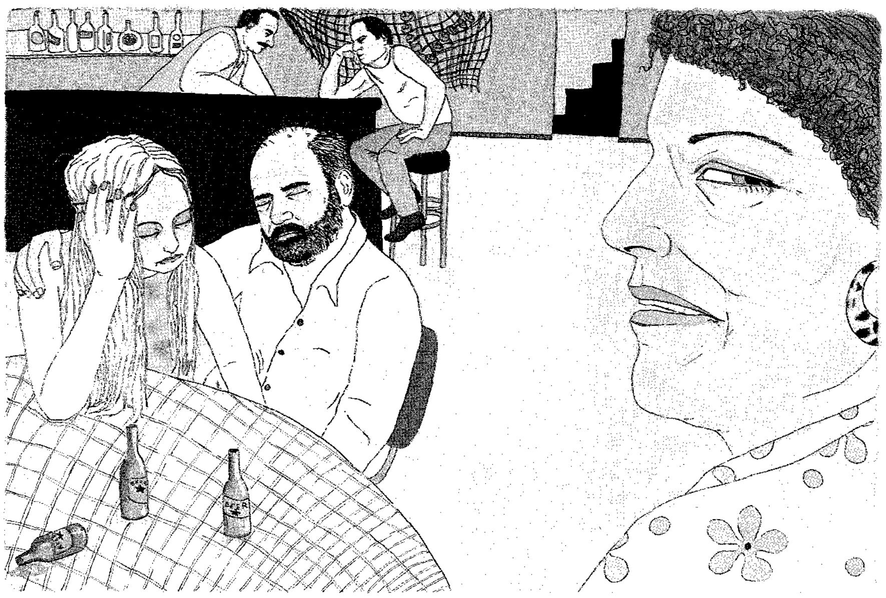
Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
DE LA GUARDA
Daryl Roth, 20 Union Sq. E.,
at 15th St. 239-6200.
DINNER WITH FRIENDS
Variety Arts, 110 Third Ave., at 14th St.
239-6200.
THE FANTASTICKS
Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St.,
at Bleecker St. 674-3838.
FOOTLOOSE
Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.
FORBIDDEN BROADWAY
Stardust, Broadway at 51st St. 239-6200.
FOSSE
Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
FULLY COMMITTED
Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St.
239-6200.
I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.
JEKYLL & HYDE
Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
THE LION KING
New Amsterdam, 214 W. 42nd St. 307-4100.
LES MISÉRABLES
Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.
MISS SAIGON
Broadway Theatre, Broadway
at 53rd St. 239-6200.
OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS
John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.
PERFECT CRIME
Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401.
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.
RENT
Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.
STOMP
Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at
St. Marks Pl. 477-2477.
TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING
St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. 239-6200.
THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES
Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 239-6200.

DANCE

NEW YORK CITY BALLET
May 24 at 8: "Concerto Barocco," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Prism," and "Symphony in Three Movements." ♦ May 25 and May 27 at 8 and May 28 at 3: "Agon," the première of a ballet by Robert La Fosse and Robert Garland, and "Slaughter on Tenth Avenue." ♦ May 26 at 8: "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "Davidsbündlertänze," and "Symphony in Three Movements." ♦ May 27 at 2: "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Le Tombeau de Couperin," "Fancy Free," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." ♦ May 30 at 8: "Glass Pieces," "Davidsbündlertänze," and "Tchaikovsky Piano Concerto No. 2." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through June 25.)
AMERICAN BALLET THEATRE
May 24 at 2: "Diversion of Angels" and "La Sylphide." ♦ May 24 at 8: "Pas des Déesses" and "La Sylphide." ♦ May 25 at 8: "Jardin aux Lilas" and "La Sylphide." ♦ May 26 and May 29-30 at 8 and May 27 at 2 and 8: "Romeo and Juliet." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through July 1.)
DANCEBRAZIL
The twenty-one-member company, made up of dancers, musicians, and capoeiristas, under the direction of choreographer Jelon Vieira, presents two premières that blend samba, candomblé, ballet, and modern-dance movement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. May 23-26 at 8, May 27 at 2 and 8, and May 28 at 2 and 7:30.)
WALLY CARDONA QUARTET
The quartet—Kimberly Bartosik, Kathryn Sanders, Matthew Winheld, and Cardona—performs "Trance Territory: Tribal Ritual for the Twenty-first Century," a work in progress that adds technological effects to ancient rites. (Danspace Project, St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. May 26-27 at 8:30.)
"NIGHT LIGHT"
Drawing on archival photographs of the Chelsea neighborhood, the choreographer and performance artist Ann Carlson re-creates the activities of previous eras in their present-day locations (a farmer takes his pig to what is now a gallery, etc.), in a travelling site-specific work produced by the Kitchen. (For locations, call 255-5793, ext. 11. May 24-27 at 8. Through May 27.)
"I, RASPUTIN"
The choreographer Kriota Willberg, the writer Todd Alcott, and the designer R. Sikoryak team up to present the story of the Russian monk as a tale of debauchery and spirituality, which they convey via Russian folk dance, slide projections, stage combat, etiquette manuals, and other unconventional means. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. May 25-28 at 7:30. Through June 11.)
"TAP EXTRAVAGANZA 2000"
For the keynote event of National Tap Day, Ted Levy hosts a showcase of tap talent which includes Jimmy Slyde, the Silver Belles, Roxanne Butterfly's BeauteeZ' and the Beat, and the Flintstone Hoofers. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. May 28 at 7.)


LARA TOMLIN

"Small Craft Warnings," by Tennessee Williams, at the Tribeca Playhouse.

"5 FINGER DISCOUNT"
The five members of Kick/Stand Dance each choreograph at least one work apiece. The program features "Lap," by Autumn Anna Luckey, "Neither Her Nor Their," by Layla M. Childs, and "Joyous (A Circus)," by Abby Bender. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. May 24-27 at 8.)

NIGHT LIFE
CONCERTS

VISION FESTIVAL
This festival, now in its fifth year, hoists the banner of avant-garde and free jazz. Highlights of its final week include a three-trumpet throw-down with Dave Douglas, Baikida Carroll, and Roy Campbell, on May 24; a solo saxophone performance by David S. Ware, on May 25; New Orleans free-jazz saxophone legend Kidd Jordan, on May 26; and Bill Dixon's epic composition "Index," performed by an all-star version of the Vision Orchestra, on May 27. Sunday night, May 28, holds much promise for a rewarding evening of duos by pianist Myra Melford and reeds player Marty Ehrlich, with special guest Joseph Jarman, as well as new work by William Parker's Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra. The final night, May 29, features a tribute to Julius Hemphill, who was the saxophone's best friend, first in the four-horn-and-no-rhythm-section World Saxophone Quartet and then with his own all-saxophone sextet. Marty Ehrlich, a superb saxophonist in his own right, keeps Hemphill's spirit alive by leading his own exacting and robust version of the sextet. (New Age Cabaret, 23 St. Mark's Pl. Shows are from 7 to 1. For more information, visit www.visionfestival.org.)
FIONA APPLE
After her recent New York City show was cut short by a tantrum (the notorious acoustics at Roseland got on her nerves, and she stomped off the stage in a huff), Apple returns to honor all those ticket holders who have waited so long to see her invariably nutty stage show. Meanwhile, her majestic new album, "When the Pawn Hits . . .," has failed to sell, which has a lot to do with the fact that—as a freakishly mature recording artist—she's twenty-three going on fifty. God only knows what kind of genius she'll be when she grows up. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 26 at 8.)
BLINK-182
Like their soul brothers in Green Day, the members of this adorably obnoxious, polymorphously tattooed trio have raided the annals of punk rock and New Wave (borrowing liberally from the Buzzcocks, the Ramones, and the Cars), added their own sophomoric humor, and come up with a refreshingly dynamic sound. The band's hit single, "What's My Age Again?," may be the finest paean in recent years to the charms of being young and stupid. (Jones Beach Theatre. 516-221-1000. May 30 at 7.)

CLUBS

Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it's advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.

BOWERY BALLROOM
6 Delancey St. (533-2111)—Four hardworking local bands that regularly pack smaller downtown venues share the stage here on May 25. **Dana Fuchs** and her band turn out world-weary blues-infused originals that come to life in Fuchs's rich voice. With the **Josh Dodes Band** freed from the confines of its regular home, the Bitter End, expect pianist Dodes to make the most of the Ballroom's fine acoustics. **Stage** is a modern rock band that's opened for Kiss and Jon Bon Jovi, among others. The **Realistics** came together two years ago, when its members were in high school, and its music updates the harmonic organ pop of the early sixties.

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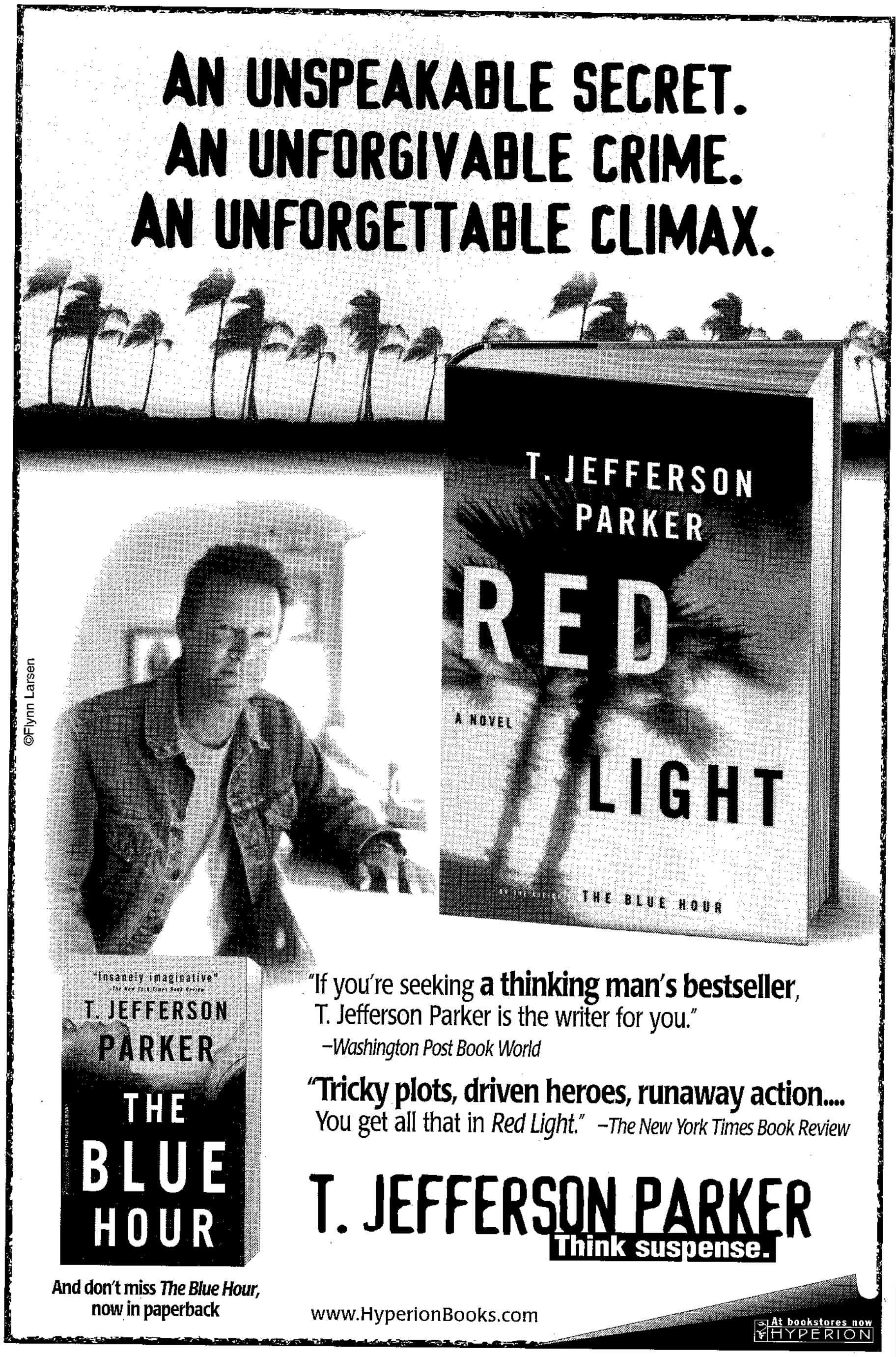
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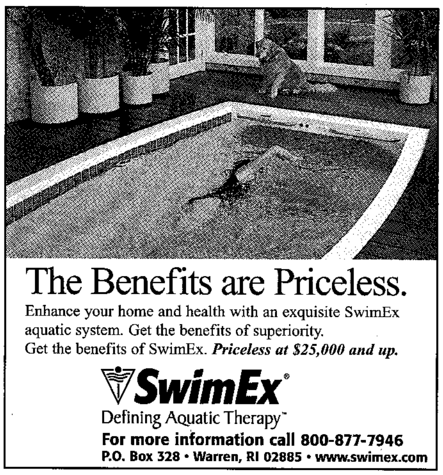
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BROWNIES
169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—May 27: A night of strange and highly compelling grooves with **Drums and Tuba** and the **Pleasure Unit.** May 30: **Hellride East**, a one-off trio featuring former Minuteman bassist Mike Watt and Dinosaur Jr. alums guitarist J Mascis and drummer Murph.

CBGB & OMFUG
315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—A narrow, graffiti-strewn cave packed every evening with new and used bands. ♦ Next door, at CB's Gallery, **Charming Hostess**, a thoroughly delightful, six-piece ensemble from San Francisco, stops by on May 29. Three female, Balkan-inspired singers (one doubles on violin, and another on accordion) join up with three instrumentalists to create a complex type of Eastern European fun with more than a touch of the Residents thrown in. Ethereal melodies shift elegantly with precise rhythmic accompaniment, and the over-all effect encourages an urge to dance, drink vodka, and look into flights to Slovenia. With **Barbez**, a

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TABLES FOR TWO

PAMPA
768 Amsterdam Ave. (865-2929)—It's a sexist generalization to say that men love steak, but an excellent case is being made for it at this tiny, inexpensive Argentinean grill situated on an undistinguished stretch of the Upper West Side. A long line of robustly male meat-eaters (as well as a few women and families) stand out front on many a night, shifting impatiently from foot to foot, like gauchos in the wilderness, waiting to be fed. Once inside, they're fed well and simply, with nicely charred slabs of flavorful beef, a mixed grill for two, juicy sausages, and other forms of animal flesh, accompanied by heaping helpings of some of the city's best frites, topped with fresh parsley and a bracing handful of crushed garlic.

The room is pretty and sexy, with dark-persimmon- and peach-colored walls glowing from the light of the open grill's fire. But, when it comes to the food, beauty is not the point, according to the manager, Joaquín Martínez, who says that Argentineans value taste over outward appearance. He compares the imported cuts, which come from cows that "walk freely in the pampas" and are thinner and less lovely than their American counterparts, to ugly tomatoes and peaches: they taste a lot better than they look, and they also taste the way they're supposed to—natural. Unfortunately this doesn't apply to the tomato salad, which on a recent night was both unattractive and flavorless. Most of the other appetizers, though, are genuine and good, especially the *picada pampa*, an antipasto tray of puckery hot pickled vegetables, various slices of cured meat, and mild cheese; the empanadas; and the grilled *provoletta*, a mess of cowboy-campfire-style cheese melted on the grill, for eating with bread.

Martínez is especially enthusiastic about the condiments. He's been known to appear at the table, as suave as Antonio Banderas, and ask in a deep voice, "How do you like the chimichurri sauce?"—a mix of garlic, olive oil, rosemary, and hot pepper so delicious that most people put it on everything—before waxing poetic about the dark-green hot sauce that accompanies the crisp Peruvian chicken. After indulging in the steak-eating ritual at Pampa, the exquisite pineapple, melon, and peach gelati are the only desserts to have. Two more things to know: on the twenty-ninth of each month, gnocchi is traditionally served (place a dollar under your plate for good luck), and during the summer you can eat in the garden outdoors. (Open daily for dinner, weekends for brunch and dinner. Entrées $7-$14.)

—*Emily Nunn*

Brooklyn ensemble that produces woozy café rock. Elements of klezmer, French *musette*, punk, and tango are bound together by a mesmerizing accordion redolent of dripping candles.

FEZ
380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—May 26: **Charming Hostess** (see CBGB & OMFUG). The **Mingus Big Band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

IRVING PLAZA
17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—May 25-26: **Ween.** One of the more unlikely musical odysseys of the past decade and a half, pseudo brothers Gean and Dean Ween have earned a devoted following by devoting themselves to abject unpredictability. Over the course of three recent CDs, the band has travelled from Zappa-flavored scatology to Lava-lamp soul to chicken-pickin' country. Most importantly, Ween plays every genre it decides to inhabit with resolute perfection, as is clear on its new release, "White Pepper." Think of them as the Coen Brothers of rock and roll.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—**Už Jsme Doma** (loosely translated, "Now I Get It"), an explosive and powerful avant-punk Czech band, arrives on May 25. Formed in 1985 in defiance of the Communist regime, the band's music was considered "antisocial" by the government, and for more than four years they performed in the Czech underground (their first gig was an illegal concert on a barge). With a protean lineup (only tenor saxophonist Jindra Dolanský is an original member), the Prague-based band outlasted the Communists, releasing five albums and touring extensively since the Velvet Revolution. The Czechs are now on a lengthy sojourn to North America with a new record, "Ears," which showcases ferocious saxophone playing, Slavic-influenced melodies and rhythms, and soaring ensemble singing.

MAXWELL'S
1039 Washington St., Hoboken (201-798-0406)—May 24: **Sleater-Kinney,** the critically acclaimed all-female, power-punk trio out of Olympia, Washington. May 26-27: **Luna.** Led by Harvard grad Dean Wareham, who drove Galaxie 500 to college-rock greatness, this New York quartet makes a dreamy kind of music so frankly derivative that it's both disposable and eternal. Last year, though, after four albums, Elektra found the band simply disposable and dropped it. They have since signed with the indie label Jericho, and their latest album is "The Days of Our Nights."

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—May 26: The Brazilian guitarist **Vinicius Cantuária** has lived in New York City for the past five years, rubbing elbows with such local musicians as Bill Frisell, Arto Lindsay, and Laurie Anderson, all of whom contribute to his latest album, "Tucumã." May 28: **Charming Hostess** (see CBGB & OMFUG).

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

BIRDLAND
315 W. 44th St. (581-3080)—May 25-27: Try this for a parlor game: name two jazz artists of the past four decades that bassist **Buster Williams** *hasn't* played with. Good luck. The ubiquitous virtuoso will have pianist **Mulgrew Miller** on hand to help generate sparks. Dining.

CARLYLE HOTEL
Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and, through June 24, **Bobby Short.** ♦ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **Barbara Carroll** is in attendance.

IRIDIUM
48 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through May 28: The **Eliane Elias** trio. The Brazilian-born pianist and vocalist Elias has a light-handed ease with tropical rhythms and phrasing, as well as with mainstream jazz. She has an unsurprisingly easy way with the songs of Antonio Carlos Jobim, the Brazilian master whose work has been a fa-

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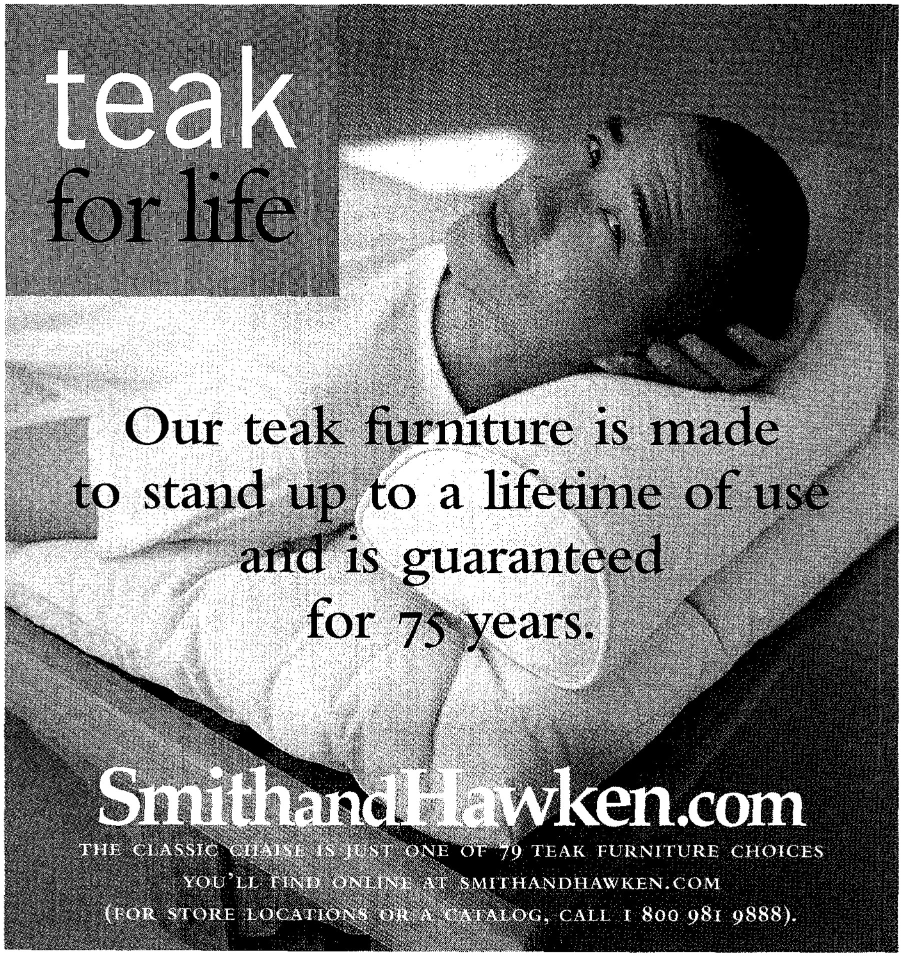
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STICKS AND STONES *Andy Goldsworthy and an assistant put finishing branches on a recent piece, at Storm King Sculpture Park in Mountainville, an hour north of the city. Goldsworthy also has a work currently at the LeLong Gallery in Manhattan—a plaster rather than stone wall for a change, and a line made of reed that traverses the space. See Galleries Uptown.*

REUBEN COX

vorite of jazz players for some four decades. Mondays belong to electric-guitar innovator **Les Paul.**

JAZZ STANDARD
116 E. 27th St. (576-2232)—Through May 28: **David O'Rourke** and **Lewis Nash's Celtic Jazz Collective.** Only in America. Multi-culti to the max, this collective will attempt to bring together two styles of music that are as difficult to fashion into a palatable combination as, say, Guinness and apple pie. The jazz contingent will feature such fine, and obviously game, players as violinist **Regina Carter,** bassist **Peter Washington,** percussionist **Steve Kroon,** and drummer **Nash;** the Celtic crowd features guitarist and arranger **David O'Rourke,** button accordionist **Martin Reilly,** and uilleann-pipe player **Paddy Keenan.** Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY
74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—May 24: For more than forty years, since long before eclecticism became a hip calling card, pianist and academic **Ran Blake** has been taking in all that the world has to offer and then funnelling it out as spare, emotionally complex, and resolutely personal music. May 25: **Matt Darriau's Celtic Eclectic.** It's a small world after all for Darriau, the clarinet and reeds player who lives to cast his musical net ever wider. His Celtic Eclectic band finds delightful ways of warping the traditional sounds of the British Isles. May 29: **Drew Gress's Lyric Collision.** Bassist and composer Gress will bring the same smarts and sharp musicianship to his new band, Lyric Collision, that he brings to his regular role as sideman for such disparate players as pianist Fred Hersch and saxophonists Andy Laster and **Tim Berne,** who, along with drummer **Tom Rainey** and pianist **Uri Caine,** make up the rest of this provocative quartet.

TONIC
107 Norfolk St. (358-7503)—May 25: No matter what you think of **Derek Bailey's** music, you've got to give this British guitarist-theorist credit for sticking to his guns. For thirty years he's been presenting the sounds of untrammelled free improvisation—not necessarily even the jazz kind—on his independent Incus label with nary a glimmer of commercial recognition. If critical acclaim equalled financial remuneration, Bailey would be rolling in dough; as it is, we're lucky that he's found a way of getting to our shores to play with eager, like-minded musicians such as drummer **Susie Ibarra.**

ZINC BAR
90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Whether blowing tank-force tenor sax with the Mingus Big Band, or making lyrical sketches on a Kip Hanrahan recording (to mention just two of his myriad projects over the past decade), **John Stubblefield** (here May 23-24) can be counted on to make music that is at once intelligent and impassioned. May 25: The exceptional Cuban guitarist and singer **Juan-Carlos Formell.**

ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 82nd St. (879-5500)—**"Now! Modern Photographs from the Permanent Collection."** Through Oct. 22. ♦ **"After Nicolas Poussin: New Etchings by Leon Kossoff."** Through Aug. 13. ♦ **"Art and Oracle: Spirit Voices of Africa."** Through July 30. ♦ **"Painters in Paris: 1895-1950"** presents more than a hundred modernist works from the museum's collection, by thirty-eight masters. Through Dec. 31. ♦ **"The World of Scholar's Rocks."** Through Aug. 20. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:30, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 9.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—**"Making Choices,"** the twenty-four-part show, concentrates on works made between 1920 and 1960, drawn exclusively from the museum's extensive holdings, in a series of tightly focussed exhibitions, several devoted to a single artist (Man Ray, Cartier-Bresson, Morandi). Closing, in stages, on Aug. 22, Sept. 19, and Sept. 26. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 10:30 to 5:45; Fridays, 10:30 to 8:15.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM
Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—**"1900: Art at the Crossroads"** reopens a sort of art-world time capsule, contrasting representative works from the movements that took shape at the beginning of the past century. Established masters (Bouguereau, Burne-Jones, Degas, Eakins, Gauguin, and Munch) are displayed near the upstarts of the day (Kandinsky, Matisse, Mondrian, and Picasso). Through Sept. 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 9 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 9 to 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3676)—The latest Biennial exhibition would be a greater pleasure—

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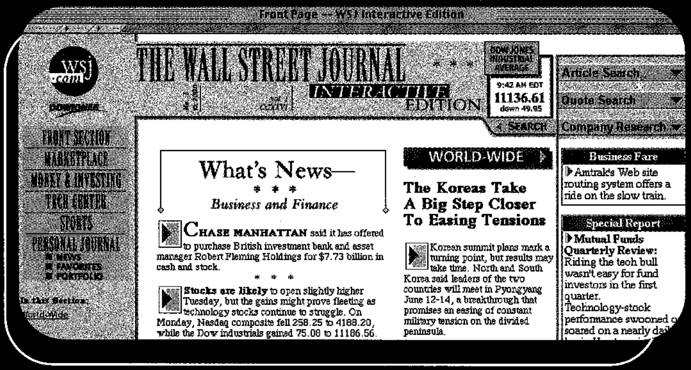

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World-Wide
WORLD-WIDE
Business Fare
Special Report

What's News—

* * *

Business and Finance

CHASE MANHATTAN said it has offered to purchase British investment bank and asset manager Robert Fleming Holdings for $7.73 billion in cash and stock.

* * *

Stocks are likely to open slightly higher Tuesday, but the gains might prove fleeting as technology stocks continue to struggle. On Monday, Nasdaq composite fell 258.25 to 4188.20, while the Dow industrials gained 75.08 to 11186.56.

The Koreas Take A Big Step Closer To Easing Tensions

Korean summit plans mark a turning point, but results may take time. North and South Korea said leaders of the two countries will meet in Pyongyang June 12-14, a breakthrough that promises an easing of constant military tension on the divided peninsula.

Amtrak's Web site routing system offers a ride on the slow train.

Mutual Funds Quarterly Review: Riding the tech bull wasn't easy for fund investors in the first quarter. Technology-stock performance swooned o soared on a nearly dai

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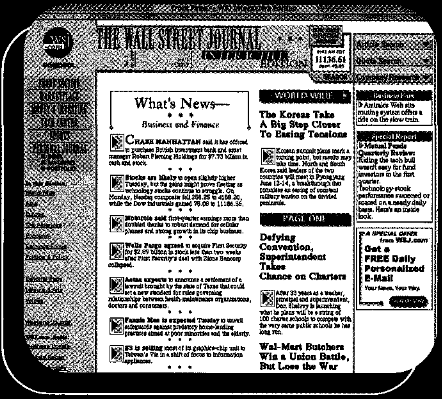

What's News—

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Business and Finance

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* * *

Motorola said first-quarter earnings more than doubled thanks to robust demand for cellular phones and strong growth in its chip business.

* * *

Wells Fargo agreed to acquire First Security for $2.89 billion in stock less than two weeks after First Security's deal with Zions Bancorp collapsed.

* * *

Aetna expects to announce a settlement of a lawsuit brought by the state of Texas that could set a new standard for rules governing relationships between health-maintenance organizations, doctors and consumers.

* * *

Fannie Mae is expected Tuesday to unveil safeguards against predatory home-lending practices aimed at poor minorities and the elderly.

* * *

S3 is selling most of its graphics-chip unit to Taiwan's Via in a shift of focus to information appliances.

* * *

WORLD WIDE

The Koreas Take A Big Step Closer To Easing Tensions

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PAGE ONE

Defying Convention, Superintendent Takes Chance on Charters

After 33 years as a teacher, principal and superintendent, Don Shalvey is launching what he plans will be a string of 100 charter schools to compete with the very same public schools he has long run.

Wal-Mart Butchers Win a Union Battle, But Lose the War

Business Fare

Amtrak's Web site routing system offers a ride on the slow train.

Special Report

Mutual Funds Quarterly Review: Riding the tech bull wasn't easy for fund investors in the first quarter. Technology-stock performance swooned or soared on a nearly daily basis. Here's an inside look.

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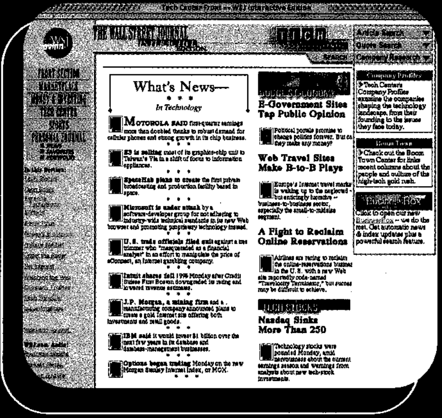

What's News—

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In Technology

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* * *

S3 is selling most of its graphics-chip unit to Taiwan's Via in a shift of focus to information appliances.

* * *

SpaceHab plans to create the first private broadcasting and production facility based in space.

* * *

Microsoft is under attack by a software-developer group for not adhering to industry-wide technical standards in its new Web browser and promoting proprietary technology instead.

* * *

U.S. trade officials filed suit against a tree trimmer who "masqueraded as a financial analyst" in an effort to manipulate the price of eConnect, an Internet gambling company.

* * *

Intuit shares fall 19% Monday after Credit Suisse First Boston downgraded its rating and lowered revenue estimates.

* * *

J.P. Morgan, a mining firm and a manufacturing company announced plans to create a gold Internet site offering both investments and retail goods.

* * *

IBM said it would invest $1 billion over the next few years in its database and database-management businesses.

* * *

Options began trading Monday on the new Morgan Stanley Internet Index, or MOX.

* * *

E-Government Sites Tap Public Opinion

Political portals promise to change politics forever. But ca they make any money?

Web Travel Sites Make B-to-B Plays

Europe's Internet travel marke is waking up to the neglected — but enticingly lucrative — business-to-business sector, especially the small-to-midsize segment.

A Fight to Reclaim Online Reservations

Airlines are racing to reclaim the online-reservations busines in the U.S. with a new Web site reportedly code-named "Travelocity Terminator," but succes may be difficult to achieve.

TECH STOCKS

Nasdaq Sinks More Than 250

Technology stocks were pounded Monday, amid nervousness about the current earnings season and warnings from analysts about new tech-stock investments.

Company Profiles

Tech Center's Company Profiles examine the companies shaping the technology landscape, from their founding to the issues they face today.

Boom Town

Check out the Boom Town Center for links to recent columns about the people and culture of the high-tech gold rush.

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the installation is thoughtfully paced, spare, and clear—if only there were more art works that held one's attention. Instead we get a "Stepford Wives" version of contemporary art: most everything looks placid, numb, and earnestly mediocre. Exceptions include a sprawling mobile by the whimsical Sarah Sze, a trio of John Currin's odes to Wasp pulchritude, and Robert Gober's ghoulish sink sculptures, in which faucets are replaced by cadaverous legs. Painting, despite its current liveliness, is poorly represented, which may be why the video installations, especially those by Doug Aitken and Shirin Neshat, make such a strong impression. Through June 4. (Open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 9.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT PHILIP MORRIS
120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550)—Best known for sly interpretations of Mughal miniatures, Shazia Sikander pumps up the scale in an unveiled bid to be more than a doyenne of detail. A mural wraps around three walls with loose layers of translucent paper pinned to its surface. The artist's trademark iconography—her stock of figures, architectural detail, and vegetation—is painted in a loose, gestural style reminiscent of the pattern-and-decoration artists of the seventies, who were also inspired by non-Western sources. The spectre of Kushner makes us pine for Kangra, the Hindu style that influenced the artist's earlier work. Through July 7. (Open weekdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 7:30.)

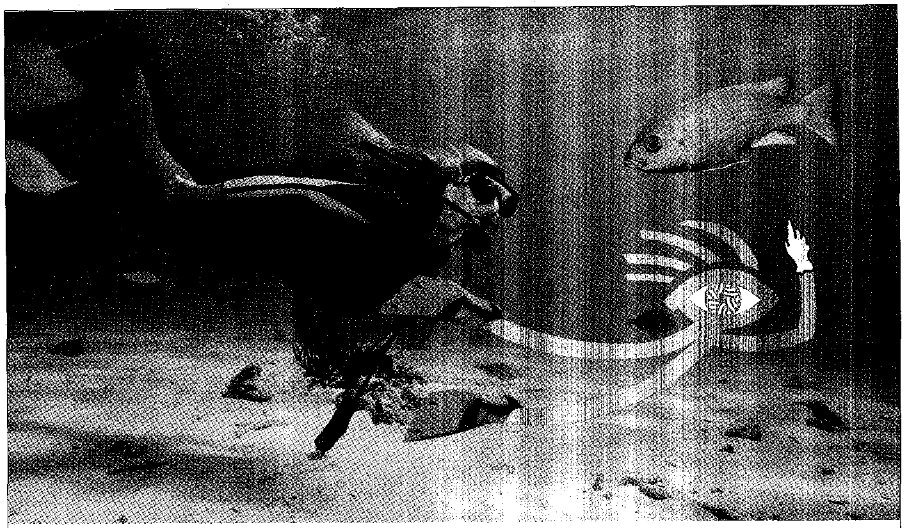
GALLERIES-UPTOWN

Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.

ELIZABETH COOPER
Art-school cynicism and primary-school silliness collide in these jubilant paintings, composed of blurts of bright color. Some of Cooper's canvases suggest the frosting-bespattered floor of a slovenly pastry shop. Others might be collections of comic-book impact balloons, with each "Kapow!," "Blam!," and "Whump!" rendered as an exclamatory splatter of pigment. Only when she tries to prove her art-historical pedigree—as in a large pastiche of Clyfford Still—do Cooper's wry, happy covers of Abstract Expressionist melodies lose their charm. Through June 6. (Roger Smith, 501 Lexington Ave., at 47th St. 832-8831.)

ANDY GOLDSWORTHY
The eminent outdoorsman has come inside, decorating the walls of this small gallery as he might those of a modernist lodge. His "Line" made of reeds begins on the ceiling above the elevator, careens around a freestanding partition, jumps up over a steam pipe, and scribbles on every side of a small room before trailing out. The aptly named "Clay Wall," whose smooth surface is drying in a cracked-earth pattern, will disintegrate over the course of the show. For Mr. Goldsworthy's outdoor work, see page 24. Through June 17. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. 315-0470.)

RENAISSANCE SCULPTURE / JOHN CONSTABLE AND CASPAR DAVID FRIEDRICH
The two sides of the Renaissance—Christian piety and pagan ribaldry—are both on view in this small and superb show, which features saints, angels, satyrs, and centaurs sculpted by some of the greatest talents of the age, including Donatello, Verrochio, and (possibly) Cellini. The fact that some of the attributions are uncertain, far from compromising the show's pleasures, elicits our own detective skills, and explains how works like these could still be in private hands. Upstairs, a show of landscape drawings by the nearly contemporary English and German Romantics makes for a fascinating study in contrasts. In the end, Friedrich's stiff linear studies renew our appreciation of John Constable's gentle greatness. Both shows through May 26. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. 879-6606.)



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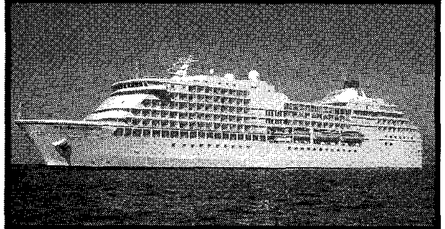

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Short List

FREDERICK EDWIN CHURCH
Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. 744-2300. Through July 15.
INKE ESSENHIGH / PETER HALLEY
Mary Boone, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 752-2929. Both shows through June 24.
LORRAINE SHEMESH
Stone, 113 E. 90th St. 987-1655. Through June 9.
NEIL WELLIVER
De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 262-5050. Through June 9.

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

EIJA-LIISA AHTILA
This Finnish artist's astonishing "Consolation Service" is a two-screen projection combining the psychological intensity of a Bergman film with the vivid imagery and quasi-narrative structure of a Doug Aitken video. Loosely speaking, the film details the unravelling of a marriage in three acts: a therapy session, a drowning scene, and an atonement ritual. But ostensible reality is interrupted by episodes of Magic Realism, as when the drowned ex-husband appears to his wife as a sci-fi apparition. Through May 27. (Gasser & Grunert, 524 W. 19th St. 807-9494.)

E. V. DAY
One of the handful of artists to appear in both the Whitney Biennial and P.S. 1's recent surveys, Day follows up here with "Transporter," the latest in her "Exploded Couture" series. The couture in question, a silver sequinned dress donated by Stephen Sprouse, seems to be materializing within a column of bright light, like a "Star Trek" crew member beaming down to planet Chelsea. Around it are smaller, more whimsical works—mummified Barbies, wire sculptures that the artist calls "Celestial Pelvises," and jokey blueprints that purport to represent Hugh Hefner's private jet. The show feels amiable but slight; Day herself hasn't quite materialized yet. Through June 3. (Urbach Architecture, 526 W. 26th St. 627-0974.)

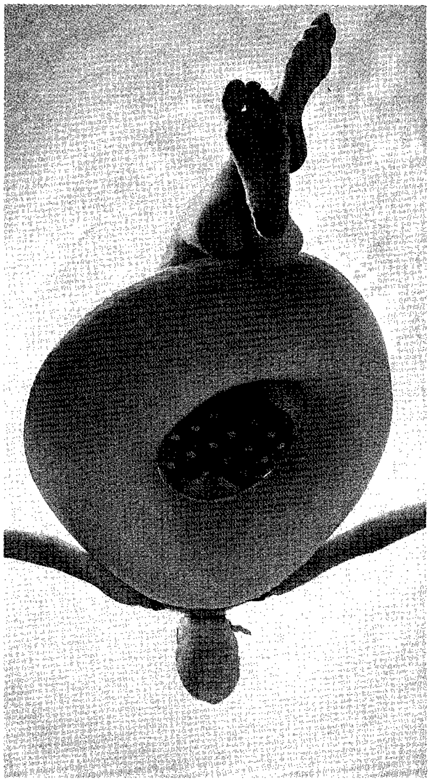
JON MC CAFFERTY
These eye-catching paintings combine the dry satisfactions of graphic design with the viscous delights of color-field abstraction. McCafferty starts by rendering a single large letter in OCR (Optical Character Recognition), the quaintly futuristic computer typeface. Over the lean typographical contours, he pours fat, flooding puddles of oil paint. The results are like trays of glowing, syrupy color, and though each panel is more seductive than the one before, all that prettiness never quite lifts out of design territory. Through June 3. (Grimm, 505 W. 28th St. 564-7662.)

ANDREA ZITTEL
The artist is devoted to the perfection of leisure (which she equates with total control), and recently spent a week living in one of her own concocted environments without any means of marking the passage of time. A wall display shows video stills from a surveillance camera trained on her, laid out in twenty-four panels, one for each hour of the day. Four maquettes of this "Time Tunnel" series are also on display. But you probably wouldn't want to duplicate her experiment after reading the note she scrawled at one in the afternoon: "I can't fall asleep but I'm exhausted which is really a problem." Through June 2. (Rosen, 525 W. 24th St. 627-6000.)

"RETROSPECTIVE"
To inaugurate elegant new Chelsea digs, Sonnabend assembles work by gallery artists ranging from classics (a quartet of Warhol's soup cans, a Rauschenberg combine from 1962) to clunkers (Matthew Weinstein's ring-of-thorns-meets-double-helix wall sculpture). The space is beautifully laid out in a graceful series of rooms which not only retains but actually improves upon the configuration of the bygone West Broadway space. The group show will change every so often until the fall. Through Sept. 1. (536 W. 22nd St. 627-1018).

Short List

RACKSTRAW DOWNES
Robert Miller, 524 W. 26th St. 366-4774. Through June 9.
WALTON FORD
Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave., at 27th St. 563-4474. Through June 30.
PAUL GEORGES
Center for Figurative Painting, 115 W. 30th St. 868-3452. Through June 10.
VANESSA JANE PHAFF
I-20 Gallery, 529 W. 20th St. 645-1100. Through June 17.
PIPILOTTI RIST
Luhring Augustine, 531 W. 24th St. 206-9100. Through May 27.



Lorraine Shemesh, at Stone through June 9.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

GREG BOGIN
High-gloss, hard-edged abstract paintings, a cross between Neo-Geo and the industrial logos that grace eighteen-wheelers whizzing down the interstate. Simple geometric forms in a palette that recalls plastic trays in a cafeteria (think Ikea blue and Burger King's orange and brown) are arranged against stark white backgrounds. Bogin's paintings mimic the bland aesthetics of a corporate lobby with a disconcerting degree of success. For the subtlety-impaired, heavy-handed titles like "The Hospitality Industry" and the inclusion of large potted plants drive the point home. Through May 27. (Koenig, 359 Broadway. 334-9255.)

TOBIAS REHBERGER
In the Bauhaus tradition, as well as that of gallery-mate Jorge Pardo, the irreverent Rehberger blends form and function in a push-me-pull-you of art and design. "Jack Lemmon's Legs and Other Libraries" is an installation of seventeen colorful shelving units with a generic Moderne appearance. Each module conceals a VCR and a television set that casts a flickering light on the wall behind it. The titles refer to the video clips that a given module projects—"Tom Cruise Jumping Library" or "Running Chicken Library." Through June 3. (Petzel, 26 Wooster St. 334-9466.)

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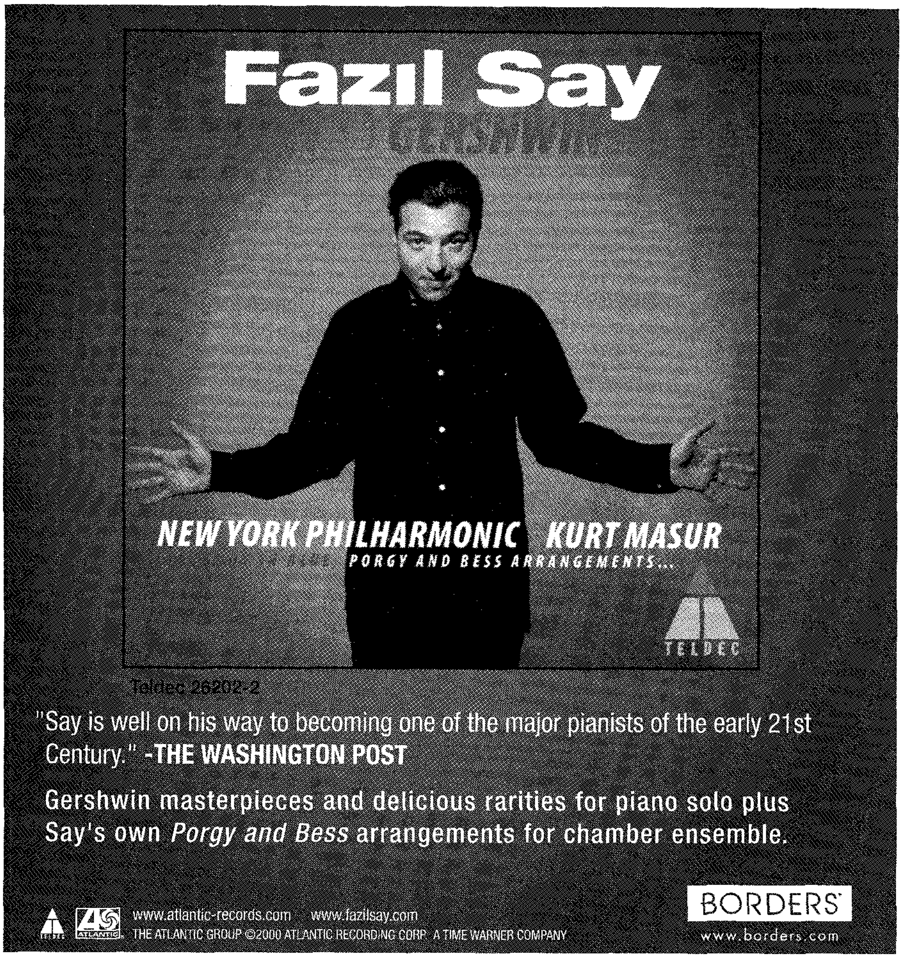
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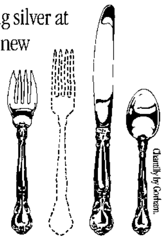

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Short List

BO BARTLETT
P.P.O.W, 476 Broome St. 941-8642. Through June 3.

SERENA BOCCHINO
Exhibit A, 160 Mercer St. 343-0230. Through June 17.

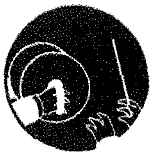
SQUEAK CARNWATH
Beitzel, 102 Prince St. 219-2863. Through June 3.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN
Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. 431-9224. Through June 10.

KURT KAUPER
Deitch Projects, 76 Grand St. 343-7300. Through June 3.

DONNA SHARRETT
Pelavin, 13 Jay St. 925-9424. Through June 24.

CLASSICAL NOTES



With Memorial Day comes the sound of marching musicians lifting their feet to the music of John Philip Sousa. That jubilant figure of American music receives fitting tribute through a momentous new release, **"Sousa Marches Played by the Sousa Band: The Complete Commercial Recordings, 1897-1930"** (Crystal Records CD461-3; three-CD set). Sousa himself was uneasy with the phonograph; as a result, he conducts only seven of the sixty-six items on this lavishly annotated collection, entrusting the rest to Arthur Pryor, Herbert L. Clark, and other wind-band luminaries. The group's earliest recordings, two wax cylinders from 1897, are almost totally obscured by crackle, but modern sound restoration has worked miracles on the electrical recordings made just a few years later. Lots of unfamiliar repertoire lurks in these tracks, and not all the playing is as clean as a whistle. But the vigorous spirit of these renditions never slackens, and hearing such forgotten Sousiana as "The National Game" or "The Sesquicentennial Exposition March" serves as a reminder of how intertwined this music was with the history of America itself.

Other recent CDs render his music with strikingly different interpretations. Such genres as the tango, the polonaise, the waltz, and the galop enliven **"On Wings of Lightning"** (Naxos 8.559029), in which the noted Sousa specialist Keith Brion leads the Razumovsky Symphony Orchestra (a polished Slovak group with strings at its core) in performances that recall the rich-toned glitter of old Vienna. **"Marches I've Missed"** (Reference Recordings RR-85CD), with the Dallas Wind Symphony, provides an outlet for the legendary band director Frederick Fennell (still active in his mid-eighties); his interpretation of Sousa's "The Gladiator March" is shaped with elegant rubato, in striking but enjoyable contrast to the Sousa Band's more straightforward reading.

Lovers of band music will also delight in **"The Teddy Bears Picnic,"** the latest offering from the New Columbian Brass Band, conducted by George Foreman (Dorian DOR-93201). There's no Sousa here, but plenty to enjoy in the way of animal imitations, as the group barks and bellows its way through fifteen such irresistible items as "Elephantine Polka," "Parade of the Doodle-Bugs," and "Somewhere a Cow Is Bawling." Be forewarned, though: Pryor's "The Whistler and His Dog" (here featuring a piccolist rather than a puckerist) is the third track, not the fifth—probably a late change that the booklet failed to reflect. Apart from that, Dorian's high production standards make this one of the most delightful collections of musical levity on the market.

—*James M. Keller*

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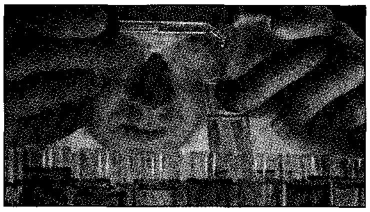

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AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

SOTHEBY'S
May 24: An auction of American paintings, drawings, and sculptures, including notable pieces by Winslow Homer, William Merritt Chase, Dennis Miller Bunker, and Mary Cassatt. ♦ May 25: French and Continental furniture, ceramics, carpets, and tapestries; also, an auction of Old Master paintings. ♦ May 26: New York socialites Saul and Gayfryd Steinberg, in the process of downsizing as they approach the empty-nest phase of their lives, are recycling decorative art works from their Park Avenue apartment, including some spectacular eighteenth-century English furniture. (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

CHRISTIE'S
May 24: French and Continental furniture, ceramics, and carpets. ♦ May 25: American paintings. ♦ May 26: Old Master paintings. (20 Rockefeller Plaza, at 49th St. 636-2000.)

CHRISTIE'S EAST
A sale of items relating to popular culture, such as movie posters, toys, and animation art; also, an evening sale of Hollywood memorabilia, including the Cowardly Lion's costume (complete with real lion fur!) from the 1939 film "The Wizard of Oz" and the 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III in which Auric Goldfinger pursued his malefactions in the 1964 James Bond film. (219 E. 67th St. 606-0430. May 24.)

DOYLE
European and American paintings and sculpture from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. May 24.)

SWANN
Maps, atlases, decorative graphics, and ephemera. (104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. May 25.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

CATHERINE CHALMERS
"Pinkies," this series of striking color studio pictures, shows its title characters—blind, hairless newborn mice—as they are born, live briefly, huddle for warmth, and die in the mouths of frogs and snakes, their natural predators. Contrary to the common cinematic pledge, animals were harmed in the making of these pictures. Through June 17. (Rare, 435 W. 14th St. 645-5591.)

KURT KRANZ
A slight show of the German artist's early work. Bring reading glasses: the best pieces are 35-mm. frames cut from contact sheets and pasted down on cheap brown paper. Amidst snapshots of colleagues horsing around and standard light-and-shadow studies, a pair of images stands out—the two shots in "Meine Mutter," which build a loving portrait of what looks like a tough mother with a sly sense of humor. Through June 10. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St. 431-0292.)

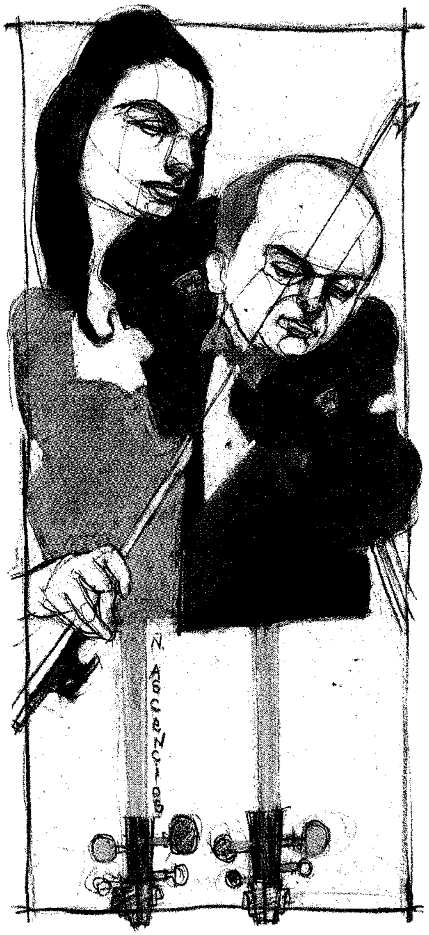
ANDRÉ NAGGAR
This Egyptian-born ex-financier does occasionally manage, as he claims, to tame time, with blurred photographs of people and animals in motion. The Fresson process, by which Naggar's editions of one are printed, is as interesting as the work, using oil pigment rather than dye, and adding colors one at a time. But don't expect to send film off to the Atelier Fresson anytime soon: each print takes a day, and the workshop's address is a trade secret. Through June 2. (Stevenson, 338 W. 23d St. 352-0070.)

STEPHEN SHORE
With all the recent attention given to contemporary large-format photographers like Andreas Gursky and Thomas Struth, a scramble to claim their artistic paternity should be no surprise. This show of Stephen Shore's 1972 road-trip snapshots and his seminal 1978-88 color landscapes is a contender. Though they don't have the conceptual strength of Gursky's work, Shore's photographs reflect a search for beauty in the mundane which continues in the work that has followed. Through June 3. (303, at 525 W. 22nd St. 255-1121.)

"PICTURE THIS: SELF-PORTRAITS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS AT WORK"
Fans can see their favorite photo stars here, from Bourke-White to Steichen to Weegee, but there's nothing new to recommend the genre, just the usual hubcap reflections and elongated shadows. The "Photographers at Work" prints are more interesting, highlighted by a truly scary shot of W. Eugene Smith dangling from a high-rise apartment window, as if to illustrate his famous course title, "Photography Made Difficult." Through June 17. (DeLellis, 47 E. 68th St. 327-1482.)

"VESTIGES"
This show links three Japanese artists through the concepts of memento and memory. Masao Yamamoto's Joseph Cornell-like collection of small snapshots, worn from touch and "aged" with tea, is scattered all over the gallery. Viewers, in picking up and arranging the prints, become curators. Across the hall, Miyako Ishiuchi's large portraits show skin as palimpsest; the zigzagging of one sitter's panty line mocks her nearby scar. In one of Yukio Oyama's minimalist, metaphoric pictures, water runs down a set of steps toward the viewer, while the composition pushes the eye against the current and back up the steps, making it unclear whether the artist is looking ahead or back. Through June 17. (Sepia, 148 W. 24th St. 645-9444.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY
1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777)—Nathan Lyons's **"Riding First Class on the Titanic."** Through June 18. ♦ James Nachtwey's **"Testimony."** Through July 23. (Open Tuesdays through Thursdays, 10-5; Fridays, 10-8; Saturdays and Sundays, 10-6.)



Pamela Frank and Andy Simionescu, soloists with New York Youth Symphony.

N. ASCENCIOS

Short List

MORTON BARTLETT
Ricco/Maresca, 529 W. 20th St. 627-4819.
Through June 24.

BARBARA ESS
Marcus, 578 Broadway. 226-3200.
Through June 10.

MALLARY MARDER
Lawrence Rubin Greenberg VanDoren. 730 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. 445-0444. Through June 10.

MARIA MIESENBERGER
Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave., at 25th St.
989-7600. Through July 7.

CATHERINE OPIE
Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway.
966-9520. Through June 10.

See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum.

CLASSICAL MUSIC
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AMATO OPERA COMPANY
Presenting "The Marriage of Figaro," in English. (Amato Opera Theatre, 219 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. May 27 at 7:30 and May 28 at 2:30. Through June 18.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

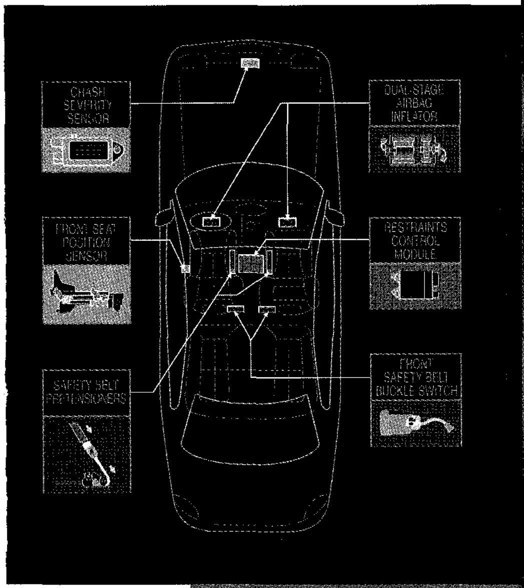
NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC
Kurt Masur conducting. May 25-27 at 8: For its final première in a première-laden season, the ensemble unveils Lowell Liebermann's Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra, composed in memory of the late trumpet pedagogue Edward Treutel and featuring as soloist Philip Smith, a Treutel protégé who joined the Philharmonic in 1978 and became its principal trumpeter ten years later. Completing the program is Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7, the "Leningrad," which commemorates that city's nine-hundred-day siege by the Nazis during the Second World War. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030.) ♦ May 29 at 8: In the orchestra's annual free Memorial Day concert, Mr. Masur conducts Bruckner's Symphony No. 7, presented in the rather infrequently performed Robert Haas edition, which removes certain textual accretions that did not figure in the composer's original conception of the piece. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK VIRTUOSI CHAMBER SYMPHONY
The orchestra, conducted by Kenneth Klein, offers music by Copland: his "Music for Movies," "Three Latin-American Sketches," Clarinet Concerto (featuring Stanley Drucker), "Appalachian Spring" Ballet Suite, and "Quiet City." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. May 24 at 8.)

COLLEGIATE CHORALE
Robert Bass directs the première of "The Hiding Tree," a forty-minute musical tale (for narrator, two soloists, chorus, and piano) by Edward Barnes, in which the chorus depicts the principal character—a man-eating monster. A selection of spirituals rounds out the program. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. May 24 at 8. For information about tickets, call 664-1390.)

NEW YORK CHAMBER SYMPHONY
Violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and cellist Lynn Harrell are the soloists in Brahms's Double Concerto. Also on the program are Haydn's Symphony No. 97, Philip Lasser's "Circle of Dreams, A Symphony" (a première), and Dvořák's Nocturne for Strings. Gerard Schwarz conducts. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. May 24-25 at 8.)

BRONX ARTS ENSEMBLE ORCHESTRA
Carlos Franzetti leads his own "Sinfonia" from "Corpus Evita," in addition to Hanson's Symphony No. 2 (the "Romantic") and three pieces by Copland: "An Outdoor Overture" and suites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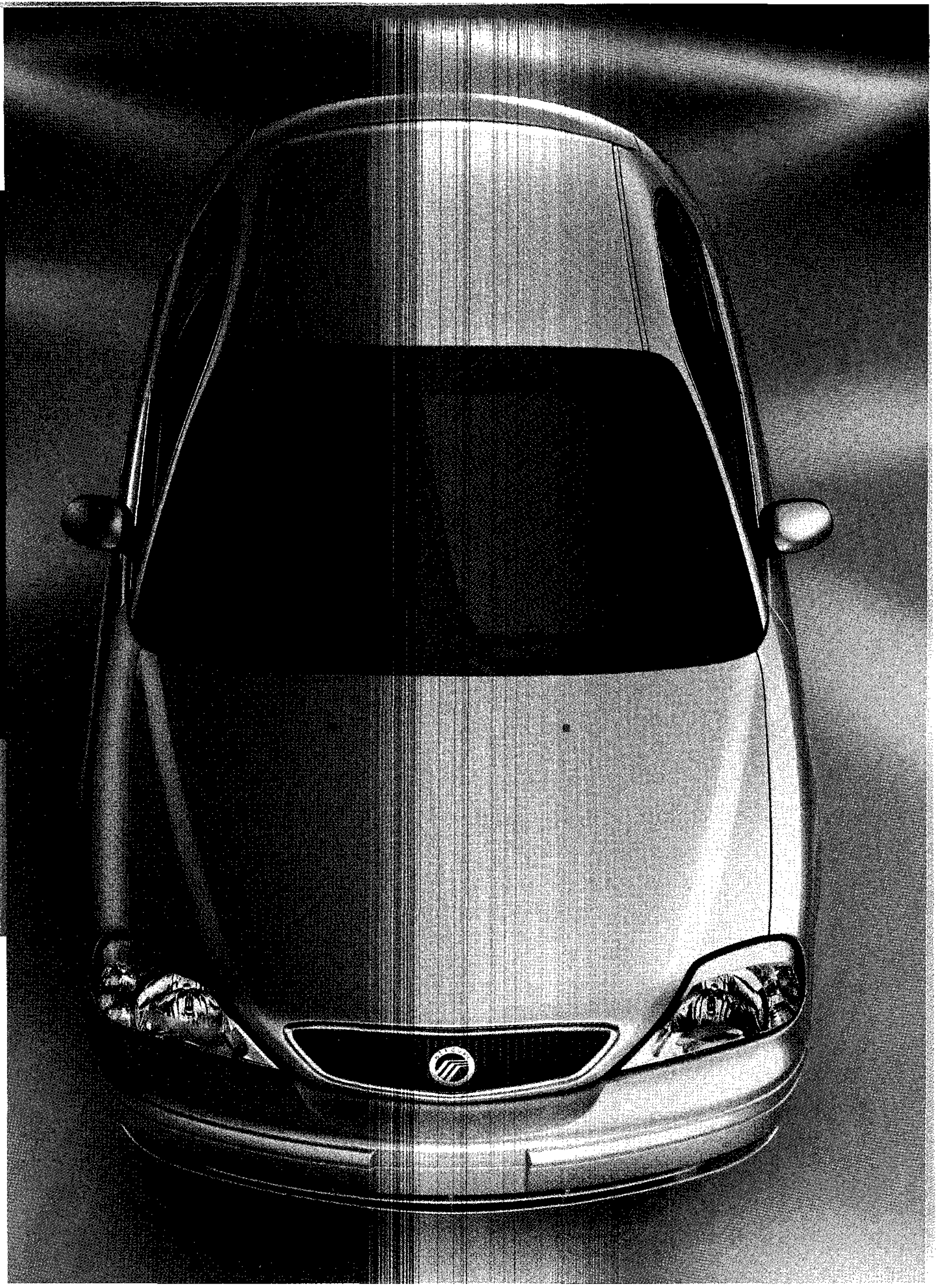

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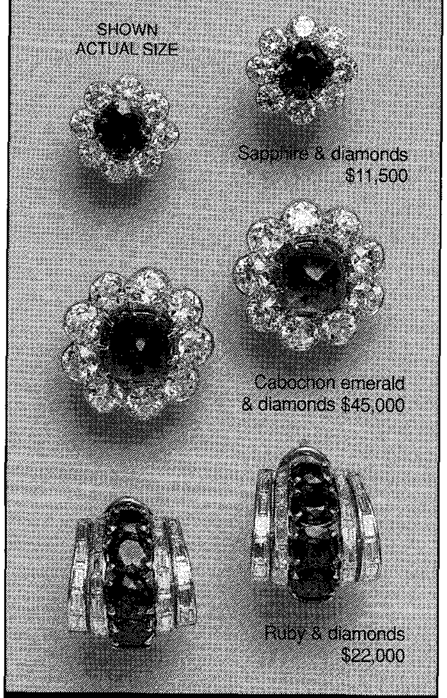

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from the ballets "Appalachian Spring" and "Rodeo." (Woodlawn Cemetery, Jerome and Bainbridge Aves., the Bronx. May 28 at 2. No tickets necessary. ♦ Note: As the concert takes place beneath a tent, it will go on even in the event of inclement weather.)

NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY
Since its founding thirty-seven years ago, this nationally recognized orchestra has served as a training ground for many of New York's most talented musicians on the rise. Back in 1978, the concertmaster was Andy Simionescu, a sixteen-year-old Romanian immigrant, and a twelve-year-old violinist named Pamela Frank sat at the stand behind him. Sparks flew briefly, fuelled by adolescent fantasies when the two played at a wedding as members of a string quartet composed of orchestra members. But soon they fell out of touch, and, though they both continued their studies at the Curtis Institute of Music, they scarcely overlapped. Years later, after Simionescu and Frank had established impressive careers either on the solo platform or in chamber music, they met again through a mutual friend, and last June they walked down the aisle at their own wedding. They celebrate their first anniversary by returning to the orchestra as distinguished soloists: she'll play violin and he'll handle the viola part in Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante in E-Flat Major (K. 364). Also on the program are Stravinsky's "Petrouchka" and the première of "Midnight Pictures," commissioned by the orchestra from the young composer Gregory Spears. Mischa Santora conducts. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 28 at 2.)

GOLDMAN MEMORIAL BAND
This band is the third-oldest professional musical organization in New York City; of surviving institutions, only the Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera were in place when it was founded. A year ago, the group had the inspired idea of serenading the permanent residents of Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery with pieces by composers interred there. Four of Green-Wood's musical denizens—Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Harvey Dodworth, Claudio Grafulla, and Leonard Bernstein—figure again in this year's Memorial Day concert, which also includes Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," two marches by Edwin Franko Goldman (who organized the band, in 1911), and David Eaton (who became the group's music director in 1998). (Green-Wood Cemetery, Fifth Ave. at 25th St., Brooklyn. May 29 at 2. No tickets necessary. Audience members should bring their own seating. The concert will be held even if the weather is poor.)

RECITALS

BENJAMIN SCHMID
The Viennese-born violinist completes his three-concert survey of unaccompanied works by Bach and Ysaÿe; this installment comprises the former's Sonata No. 2 and Partita No. 1, as well as the latter's Sonatas in E Major and E Minor (Op. 27, No. 6 and No. 4). (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 24 at 8.)

MUSIC BY OTTO LUENING
This American composer died four years short of his centennial, which is marked by a concert of songs, solo-piano and solo-cello works, and chamber compositions. A new, virtuosic flute piece by Dan Cooper pays tribute to Luening's special interest in that instrument, which he played professionally for many years. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. May 24 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

PAUL JACOBS
The organist, a recent graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, completes his fourteen-night traversal of Bach's organ music. May 24: Two sets of Preludes and Fugues in A Minor (BWV 551 and 553), among other works. ♦ May 25: The "Clavier-Übung," Part Three. ♦ May 26: Two Preludes and Fugues in E Minor (BWV 533 and 548), several choral preludes, and the Canonic Variations on "Vom Himmel Hoch." (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Evenings at 8. Admission by contribution.)

DANA HANCHARD
Though she's most noted for her work in Baroque music, this soprano also has a gift for interpreting contemporary works and even classic cabaret pieces. In this concert, presented in a casual setting, she joins with five musicians from the realms of jazz and world music—violinist Eva Atsalis, guitarist Bill Girolamo, bassist Leo Trevesa, keyboard player Tony Cedras, and drummer Aaron Scott—to perform some of her own compositions, as well as songs by the contemporary Ecuadorian composer Diego Luzuriaga and the medieval Galician troubadour Martín Codax. (Joe's Pub at the Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. May 24 at 8:30. For information about tickets, call 239-6200.)

NEW HUDSON SAXOPHONE QUARTET
Playing quartets by Elias Tannenbaum, Alec Wilder, and Steve Cohen, among others. (Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. May 25 at 1. Admission by contribution.)

NANCY WILSON
For several decades, this violinist has been a steady presence in leading American period-instrument orchestras and chamber ensembles. Here she plays Bach's E-Major Partita for Unaccompanied Violin and his G-Minor Sonata for Violin and Harpsi-

EXCURSIONS

FANTASY ISLAND
"Are you taking your passport with you?" is a running joke among Manhattanites venturing to Staten Island. Couched in that snide barb is a surprising truth: the city's least densely populated borough contains at least one place of such exotic beauty that, when you finally reach it, you'll find it hard to believe you were permitted entry without any paperwork.

The Snug Harbor Cultural Center, on the shores of the Kill Van Kull, was originally Sailors' Snug Harbor, a home for "aged, decrepit and worn-out sailors" founded in 1801 by Robert Richard Randall. By the turn of the century, more than a thousand retired seafarers strolled the campus's rolling fields and inhabited its Greek Revival buildings. The city took over the property in the early seventies, and the Cultural Center opened in 1976. Many original buildings have been restored to house art galleries and performance spaces, and they are undeniably impressive, especially the Main Hall, with its towering Ionic columns.

The best reason for visiting Snug Harbor is tucked away inside the Staten Island Botanical Garden, on the center's eighty-three-acre grounds: the New York Chinese Scholar's Garden, which opened last June and which is the sole authentic classical Chinese garden in the United States. On a recent afternoon, the only living beings inside its undulating white walls, journalists excepted, were three ducks, which fluttered skyward from behind an intricately carved mahogany screen. Covered walkways line the garden's central pond, leading to hidden alcoves, accessible through banana-leaf-shaped doorways; flowering apricot, crab apple, rugosa rose, lacebark pine, and dozens of other plants burst forth in unexpected corners.

The garden is divided by a wall with an eight-foot round opening. This is the Moon Gate of Uncommon Beauty, and it is both a passageway and a frame; looking through it from an adjacent pavilion, one glimpses a scene true to its name—a leafy, petite three-foot Japanese maple, rustling water, ancient stones. It will give you pause. How can this one-acre oasis of utmost serenity be a mere hour from Times Square? (1000 Richmond Terrace. 718-448-2500.)

—*John J. Donohue*

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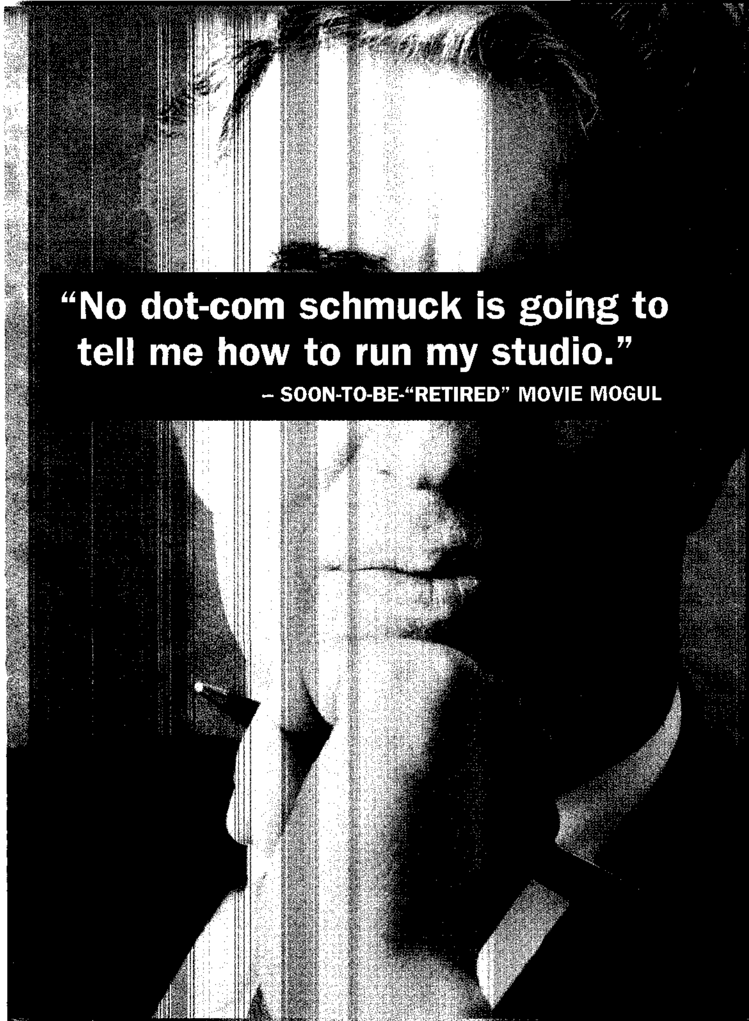

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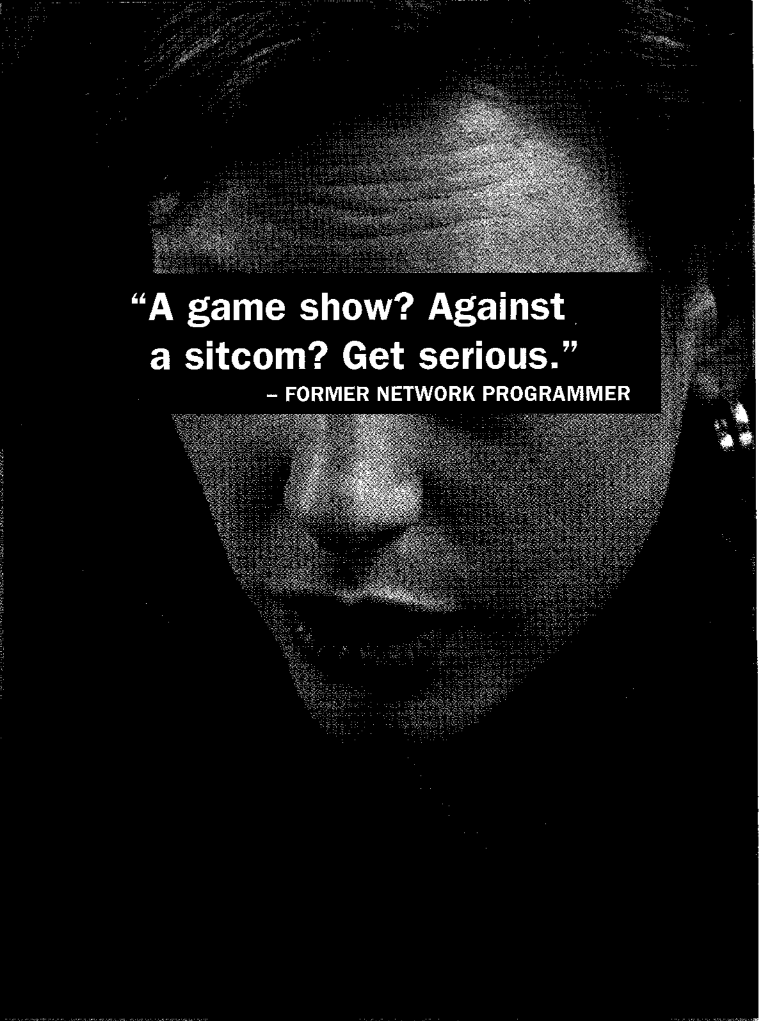
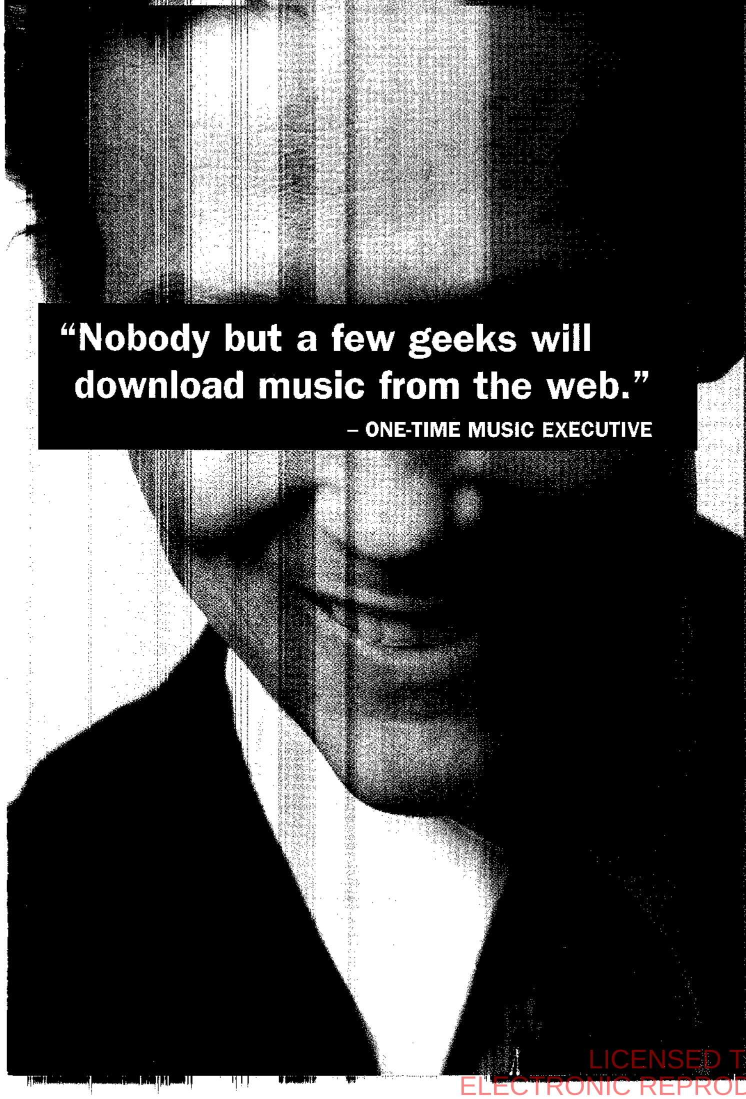


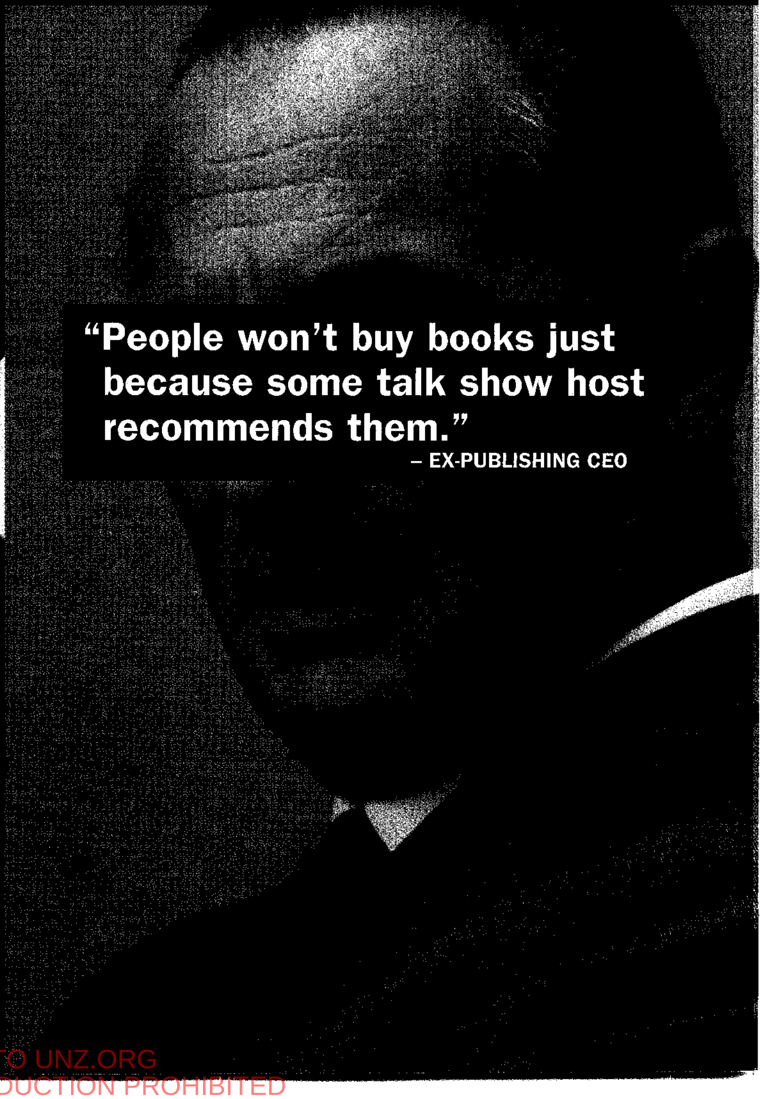
"A game show? Against a sitcom? Get serious."

– FORMER NETWORK PROGRAMMER



"Nobody but a few geeks will download music from the web."

– ONE-TIME MUSIC EXECUTIVE



"People won't buy books just because some talk show host recommends them."

– EX-PUBLISHING CEO

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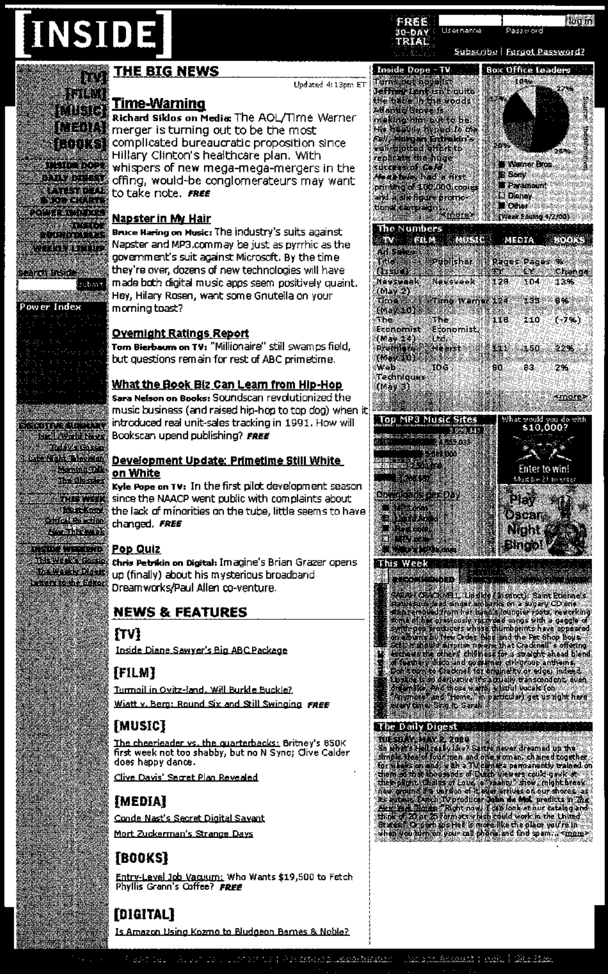

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Power Index

THE BIG NEWS

Updated 4:13pm ET

Time-Warning

Richard Siklos on Media: The AOL/Time Warner merger is turning out to be the most complicated bureaucratic proposition since Hillary Clinton's healthcare plan. With whispers of new mega-mega-mergers in the offing, would-be conglomerateurs may want to take note. *FREE*

Napster in My Hair

Bruce Haring on Music: The industry's suits against Napster and MP3.com may be just as pyrrhic as the government's suit against Microsoft. By the time they're over, dozens of new technologies will have made both digital music apps seem positively quaint. Hey, Hilary Rosen, want some Gnutella on your morning toast?

Overnight Ratings Report

Tom Bierbaum on TV: "Millionaire" still swamps field, but questions remain for rest of ABC primetime.

What the Book Biz Can Learn from Hip-Hop

Sara Nelson on Books: Soundscan revolutionized the music business (and raised hip-hop to top dog) when it introduced real unit-sales tracking in 1991. How will Bookscan upend publishing? *FREE*

Development Update: Primetime Still White on White

Kyle Pope on TV: In the first pilot development season since the NAACP went public with complaints about the lack of minorities on the tube, little seems to have changed. *FREE*

Pop Quiz

Chris Petrikin on Digital: Imagine's Brian Grazer opens up (finally) about his mysterious broadband Dreamworks/Paul Allen co-venture.

NEWS & FEATURES

[TV]

Inside Diane Sawyer's Big ABC Package

[FILM]

Turmoil in Ovitz-land. Will Burkle Buckle?

Wiatt v. Berg: Round Six and Still Swinging *FREE*

[MUSIC]

The cheerleader vs. the quarterbacks: Britney's 850K first week not too shabby, but no N Sync; Clive Calder does happy dance.

Clive Davis' Secret Plan Revealed

[MEDIA]

Conde Nast's Secret Digital Savant

Mort Zuckerman's Strange Days

[BOOKS]

Entry-Level Job Vacuum: Who Wants $19,500 to Fetch Phyllis Grann's Coffee? *FREE*

[DIGITAL]

Is Amazon Using Kozmo to Bludgeon Barnes & Noble?

Inside Dope - TV

<more>

Box Office Leaders

The Numbers

TV FILM MUSIC MEDIA BOOKS

Title (Issue)	Publisher	Pages TY	Pages LY	% Change
Newsweek (May 2)	Newsweek	128	104	13%
Time (May 10)	Time Warner	124	135	8%
The Economist (May 14)	The Economist, Ltd.	118	110	(-7%)
Premiere (May 20)	Hearst	111	150	22%
Web Techniques (May 3)	TDG	90	83	2%

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This Week

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chord (with Gwendolyn Toth assisting). (St. Francis of Assisi Church, 135 W. 31st St. May 25 at 1:15. No tickets necessary.)

BARGEMUSIC
May 25-26 at 7:30: Violinists Ani Kavafian and Kerry McDermott, violist Paul Neubauer, cellist Fred Sherry, and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott collaborate on a program that consists of Mozart's Piano Trio in B-Flat Major (K. 502), Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's String Trio, and Brahms's Piano Quintet. ♦ May 27 at 7:30 and May 28 at 4: Tenor Robert White, Mr. Neubauer, and three McDermott sisters—Kerry, Anne-Marie, and Maureen (a cellist)—present a program that includes Beethoven's Piano Trio in E-Flat Major (Op. 1, No. 1) and a selection of his folk-song arrangements, in addition to "Extase" (for piano and strings), by the turn-of-the-century French composer Louis Gaston Ganne. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 718-624-4061.)

RIALTO ENSEMBLE
The vocal soloists and period-instrument players offer music by Bach (including his Cantatas No. 51, No. 54, and No. 158), with the dancers of the Snappy Dance Theater offering a choreographic counterpoint. (Church of St. Luke in the Fields, 487 Hudson St., at Grove St. May 27 at 8. For information about tickets, call 479-8561.)

"SUNDAYS ON THE ISLAND"
Schubert's "Trout" Quintet seems particularly appropriate for this series, which is held weekly in New York City's most northerly maritime community. In this concert, it shares the bill with a trio sonata by Handel. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 718-885-2478. May 28 at noon.)

STEPHEN BLACK
Following this concert of music by Saint-Saëns, Rheinberger, and Jehan Alain, the St. Thomas Church's organ-recital series adjourns until September. (Fifth Ave. at 53rd St. May 28 at 4. No tickets necessary.)

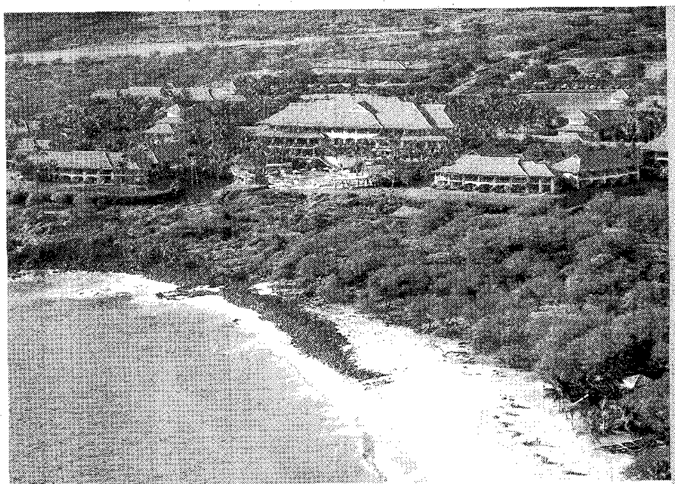
MARK JOHNSON AND WOLFGANG MUTHSPIEL
The double-bassist and the guitarist perform several of their own compositions, and improvise collages that incorporate passages from the works of Satie, Fauré, and Ligeti. (Cornelia Street Cafe, 29 Cornelia St. 989-9318. May 29 at 9.)

GANDHARVAS
A newly formed ensemble of professional musicians devoted to performing sacred music introduces itself with a concert of works from Monteverdi's "Selva Morale e Spirituale," which was published in Venice in 1640. (St. Joseph's Church, 371 Sixth Ave. May 30 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

READINGS
May 24 at 6: By poets Chard deNiord, Forrest Gander, and Thomas Lux. (Spheris Gallery, 20 Bond St., fifth floor. For reservations, which are required, call 603-756-9617.) ♦ May 25 at 7:30: By Sam Lipsyte, from his short-story collection, "Venus Drive." (Barnes & Noble, 4 Astor Pl. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 26 at 10:30: By poets Edwin Torres, Maggie Estep, Lee Ranaldo, Anselm Berrigan, and others, from their contributions to "Heights of the Marvelous: A New York Anthology." (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door.)

TALKS
May 24 at 6: Nancy Brighton, an archeologist with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, discusses the changing shoreline along the Brooklyn waterfront, from the Brooklyn Bridge to Owl's Head Park. (A. A. Low Gallery, South Street Seaport, 165 John St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 24 at 6: Gerard Koeppel, author of "Water for Gotham," talks about the history of the city's water supply. (New York Public Library, Mid-Manhattan Branch, Fifth Ave. at 40th St. No tickets necessary.) ♦ May 24 at 8: Composer Lukas Foss talks about his life and opera. (Frederick Loewe Theatre, New York University, 35 W. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)



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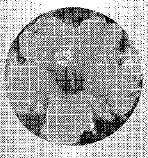

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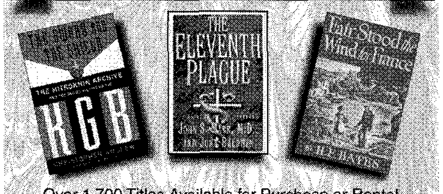

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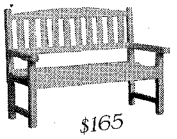

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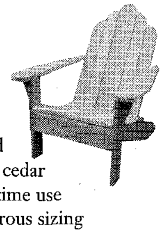

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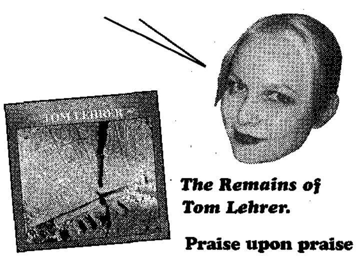

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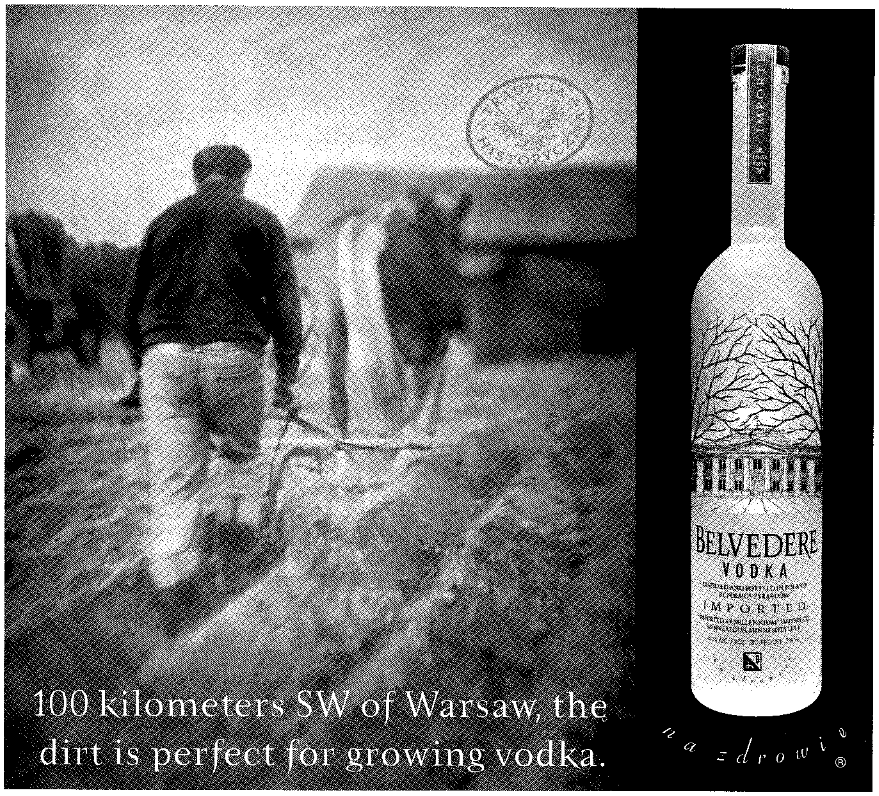
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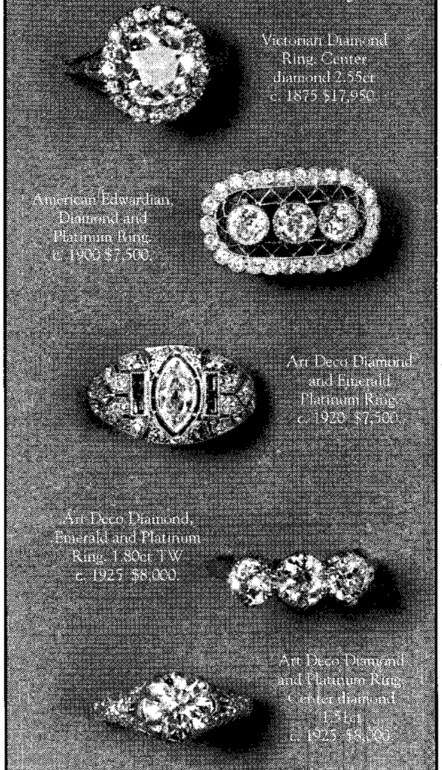
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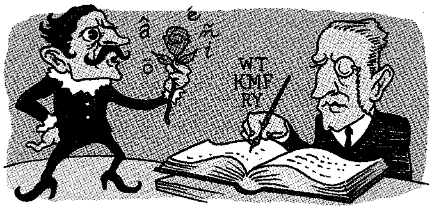
BOOK CURRENTS

In Translation



TONY MILLIONAIRE

The most powerful poems journey from language to language; one of the indicators of a great poet is a rush to translate him. Sir Thomas Wyatt, Sir Philip Sidney, and J. M. Synge have all translated the Italian poet Petrarch, and now J. G. Nichols has produced a complete cycle of the "Canzoniere" (Carcanet)—lyric sonnets to Laura, the poet's muse, whom he saw as Love embodied, "directing her bright eyes / so winningly that all else must appear / to me like utter darkness."

The hot-blooded Russian poet Nikolay Gumilyov married his muse, the celebrated poet Anna Akhmatova, but they soon divorced. Although many of his popular poems memorialize their stormy affair, "The Pillar of Fire," published in 1921 just weeks before Gumilyov's execution by a Bolshevik firing squad, addresses wider themes. A new translation by Richard McKane (Anvil/Dufour) reveals a man whose taste for opulent allusion is counterweighted by simple passion. In "The Sixth Sense," Gumilyov writes, "There is beauty in the wine that loves us / and the good bread which is in the oven, and the woman whose lot it is / to wear us down then delight us."

It is not hard to find translations of distinguished foreign poets, but it is a rare pleasure to discover a foreign poet who should be well known but is not. "Devil's Lunch" (Faber), by the Serbian poet Aleksandar Ristovic, is original not only for its author's distinctive voice but for the superb translation by the poet Charles Simic. The poems recall the hallucinatory imagery of Bosch; in "Stain on the Negative," a "matron covered with evening soapsuds" stands in her bath as Christ sluices water over her and "hands her a cloth with dirty pictures on it." Simic writes appreciatively in his introduction, "Another pair of eyes has cunningly joined our own."

—*Liesl Schillinger*

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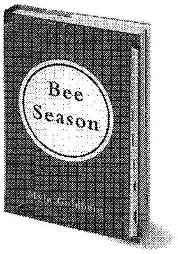

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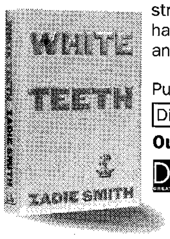

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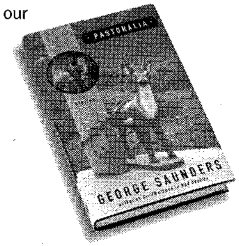

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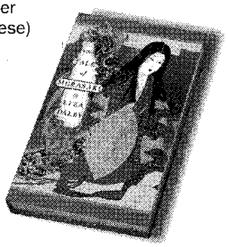
In this vivid tale of Murasaki Shikibu, the author of the world's first novel, the heroine emerges through an intricate portrait of the exotic world of eleventh-century Japan, brimming with imperial court politics and intrigue. Murasaki's life and work at court are expertly rendered, culminating in the writing of her great masterpiece, *The Tale of Genji.* (Nan A. Talese)



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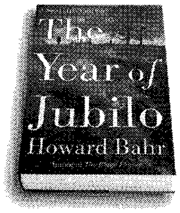

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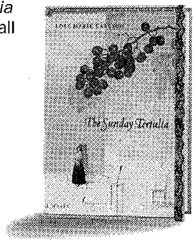

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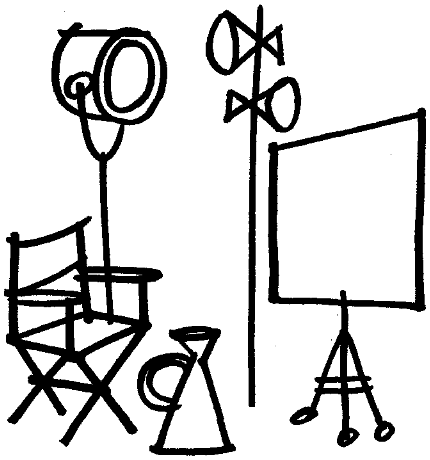


MOVIES OPENING

BETTER LIVING THROUGH CIRCUITRY
A rave-culture documentary by Jonathan Reiss, featuring interviews with Wolfgang Flür, DJ Spooky, and Genesis P-Orridge. Opening May 26. (Cinema Village.)

8 1/2 WOMEN
Peter Greenaway's new film, about a Swiss banker and his son, who take their cue from the Fellini film and create a private brothel. Opening May 26.

KIKUJIRO
A ex-yakuza (Takeshi Kitano) and a nine-year-old boy search for the boy's lost mother, in this partly autobiographical film written and directed by Kitano. In Japanese. Opening May 26. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

M:I-2
In this sequel to "Mission: Impossible," Tom Cruise returns as agent Ethan Hunt, John Woo directs, and Thandie Newton, Ving Rhames, and Steve Zahn are along for the ride. Opening May 24.

PASSION OF MIND
A psychological drama in which a woman (Demi Moore) seems to lead two different lives with two different men, one in France and one in New York. Directed by Alain Berliner. Opening May 26.

SHANGHAI NOON
A comic adventure with Jackie Chan; he's a Chinese imperial guard searching for a kidnapped princess in the Old West. Directed by Tom Dey. Opening May 26.

FILM NOTES

If a movie has been reviewed recently in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.

BATTLEFIELD EARTH
In the year 3000, mankind will be a depleted species—scavenging among the mountains, eating live rats, or toiling as slaves under the evil Psychlos. This is bad news, although it could be worse; mankind of the year 2000, for instance, is urged to sit in dark halls and watch a movie so worthless that even a rat, alive or dead, would come as welcome relief. John Travolta, with a bunch of old gray ropes where his hair should be, plays the Psychlo chief of security, who hates his job and has to contend with a band of rebellious earthlings. The director is Roger Christian, who, if early audience response is anything to go by, would do well to flee the country under an assumed name. The co-star is Forest Whitaker, a fine actor who must be praying that audiences will fail to penetrate his heavy disguise. And the script is adapted from the novel by L. Ron Hubbard, the father of Scientology; it would have taken all his fabled powers of spirit and intellect to weather this catastrophe. Meanwhile, for those who have wondered whether a philosophical message is embedded deep inside this film, good news. There is such a message, and it reads: "You are free to leave."—*Anthony Lane* (5/22/00) (Coronet Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

CENTER STAGE
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Park & 86th Street Cinemas 64th and 2nd, and Village East Cinemas.)

CROUPIER
A slight and streamlined bauble from British director Mike Hodges (who did "Get Carter"), about a writer (played to stony perfection by Clive Owen) who takes a job as a roulette dealer, aiming, in the process, to write a best-seller about his experiences. The plot revolves around the big chance he takes when he rescues a mysterious woman (Alex Kingston of "ER") from a life-threatening gambling debt. The lean and twisted screenplay—nobody is what he seems—gives Hodges ample time to play with doppelgängers, duplicity, and lots of mirrors. The sombre turns of the story and low-key performances are a welcome reminder that taut moviemaking (where violence erupts unchoreographed) can be as exciting as fast-paced editing and scorching pyrotechnics.—*Bruce Diones* (First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Quad Cinema, and State.)

DINOSAUR
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, Cinema II, East 86th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Olympia I and II, and Union Square.)

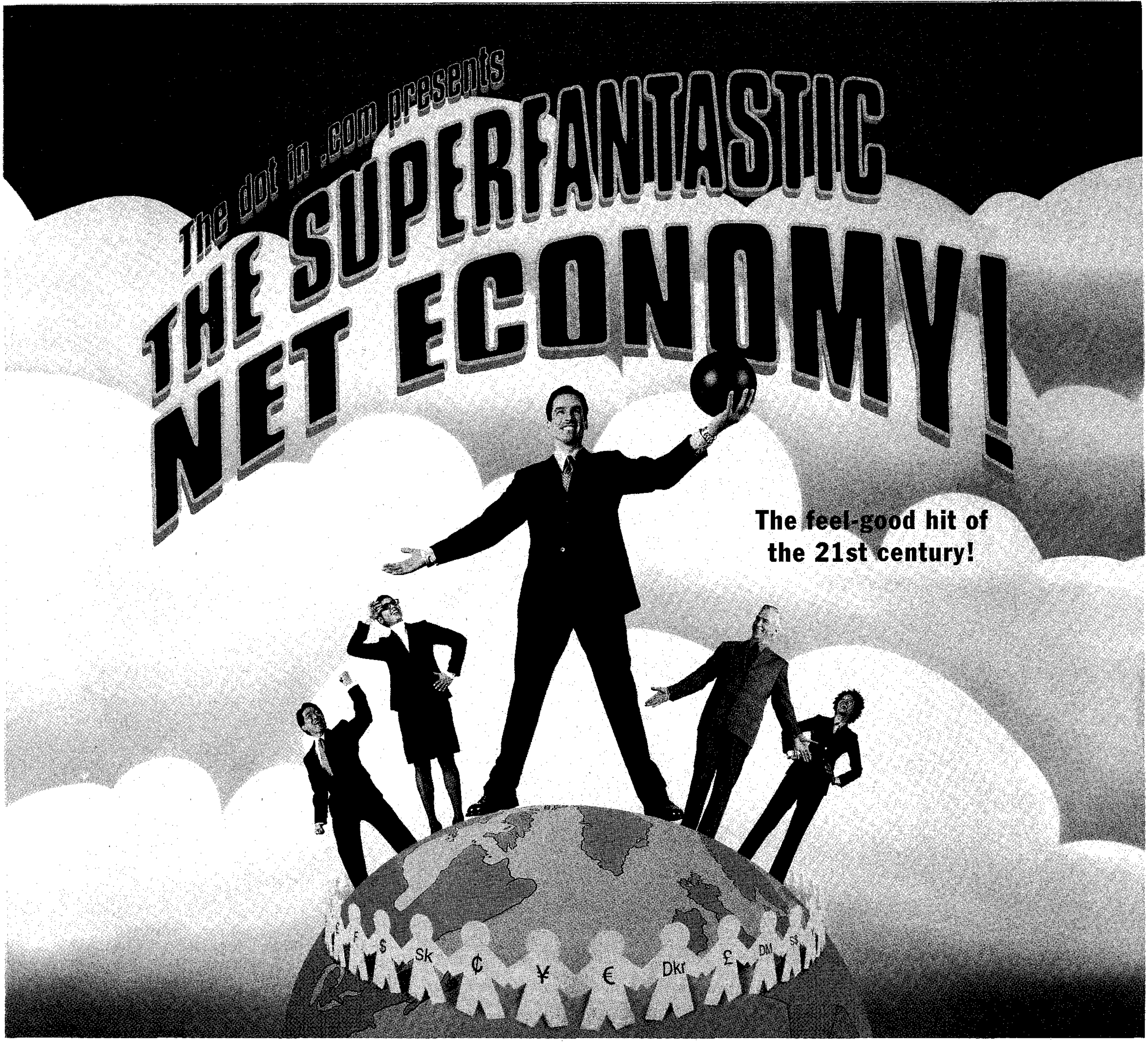
THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE BOURGEOISIE
Luis Buñuel's most frivolously witty movie, directed (at the age of 72) with exhilarating ease. It's a cosmic vaudeville show—an Old Master's mischief. He is no longer savage about the hypocrisy and inanity of the privileged classes; he has grown almost fond of their follies. This episodic story is about a group of six friends—discreetly charming amoral beasts—whose attempts to have dinner together are always being interrupted: food, that ritual center of bourgeois well-being, keeps eluding them. Buñuel takes an offhand, prankish approach to the medium; he keeps tweaking us, catching us up in an anecdote or a spooky death joke, and then dropping it. Written by Buñuel and Jean-Claude Carrière. In French. Released in 1972.—*Pauline Kael* (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema.)

FREQUENCY
A sentimental fantasy by director Gregory Hoblit which wants to be the mother of all father-son movies. This story of an adult son (James Caviezel) who communicates via ham radio with his long-dead dad (Dennis Quaid) has all the appropriate Twilight Zone twists. When the son warns his father of his soon-to-be accidental death, Dad takes the advice and survives, and their lives change (not for the better). Hoblit's camera lingers on the actors' faces, and the aggressively emotional performances feel authentic; the film's blatant heart-tugging is earned. The plot, however, about a serial killer who eludes capture because history's been altered (and the pursuit by father and son to bring him to justice), has major-league logic flaws, even for a time-travel picture ("Time Bandits" made more sense). Still, the film moves along at an entertaining clip (thanks to Hoblit's "Hill Street Blues" experience), and there are worse things than a sappy, well-acted thriller.—*B.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema 3rd Avenue, East 86th Street, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Union Square, and Waverly.)

GLADIATOR
It's been many years since movie screens clanged with Roman history; directors are rightly cautious about trying to reconcile the drama of martial valor with the sight of men in short metal skirts. In the hands of Ridley Scott, however, the Empire strikes back; his new picture is strong and stirring, almost to a fault. Russell Crowe plays Maximus, a Roman general so victorious in battle and so popular with his troops that the incoming emperor, Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), decides within minutes to have him killed. Maximus escapes but winds up in slavery, under the rheumy eye of Proximo (the late Oliver Reed). His prowess established in the arena, our hero returns to the Coliseum to perform his final act of revenge. The simplicity of the plot feels right; whenever the movie strays into complexity—as in the dealings between Commodus and his sister (Connie Nielsen)—it founders and slows. What you want is the games, and Scott delivers them avidly, complete with unfed tigers. The emotional and political aftertaste of the film is another matter; the way in which it encourages a lust for blood and a rage for the restoration of order will not bear much examination. When in Rome, however, you might as well cheer like the Romans.—*A.L.* (5/8/00) (Art Greenwich Twin, Astor Plaza, Chelsea Cinemas, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, Olympia I and II, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Ziegfeld.)

HAMLET
In this modern-dress version, the black towers of Times Square, fretted with neon, tessellated with ledges, balconies, and catwalks, make a sinister and eloquent setting for the power struggles within the Denmark Corporation. The bedraggled Hamlet (Ethan Hawke), a slacker in a knit cap, recites "To be or not to be" in a video store and washes Polonius's blood-soaked clothes in a laundromat. Yet this version of the world's most popular play is certainly not a travesty. Michael Almereyda, a young veteran of the New York independent scene, has developed his own form of visual poetry among the corporate settings and video screens, and many of the translations into contemporaneity are both witty and oddly right. Hawke is a depressed and adolescent Hamlet: it's not a noble or heroic interpretation, but he doesn't cross the border into self-pity, and, in the end, the emotional power of the old play comes through. With Kyle MacLachlan as the viciously happy C.E.O., Claudius; Diane Venora, much aroused by her new husband, as Gertrude; Bill Murray as Polonius; Liev Schreiber as Laertes; Sam Shepard as the Ghost; and Julia Stiles as Ophelia, a tense Manhattan girl with a weakness for corporate reflecting pools and waterfalls. Music by Carter Burwell. Cinematography by John de Borman.—*David Denby* (5/15/00) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

HIGH FIDELITY
A short, sharp movie from Stephen Frears, who may be trying to shake himself awake after the languors of his last film, "The Hi-Lo Country." The source is Nick Hornby's buoyant novel, which was set in North London, but the shift to Chicago feels easy, perhaps because difficulties with girls and a penchant for listing favorite pop songs are universal symptoms of male haplessness. John Cusack stars as Rob, who runs a ratty record store called Championship Vinyl; if anything, the records are more tightly packed in his apartment, which may be why his girlfriend Laura (Iben Hjejle) has just moved out. For most of the picture, they duck and weave, unable to decide whether to stay together; not much happens, and, like Laura, you want things to move on. Yet Frears keeps jump-starting the action with fast cuts, flashbacks, and a jolting current of loud music. (The end credits, which roll to a Stevie Wonder song, send you out on a high.) Why Frears made the film so dark and rain-drenched is something of a mystery; perhaps he was seeking a visual match for the glumness of perpetual adolescence. No love, the film ruefully suggests, will ever be as much fun as a good love song. Fortunately, Cusack and the rest of the cast—notably Jack Black, as a noxious compound of slob and snob—insist, like all good discophiles, on hearing both sides.—*A.L.* (4/3/00) (Criterion Center, Empire 25, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)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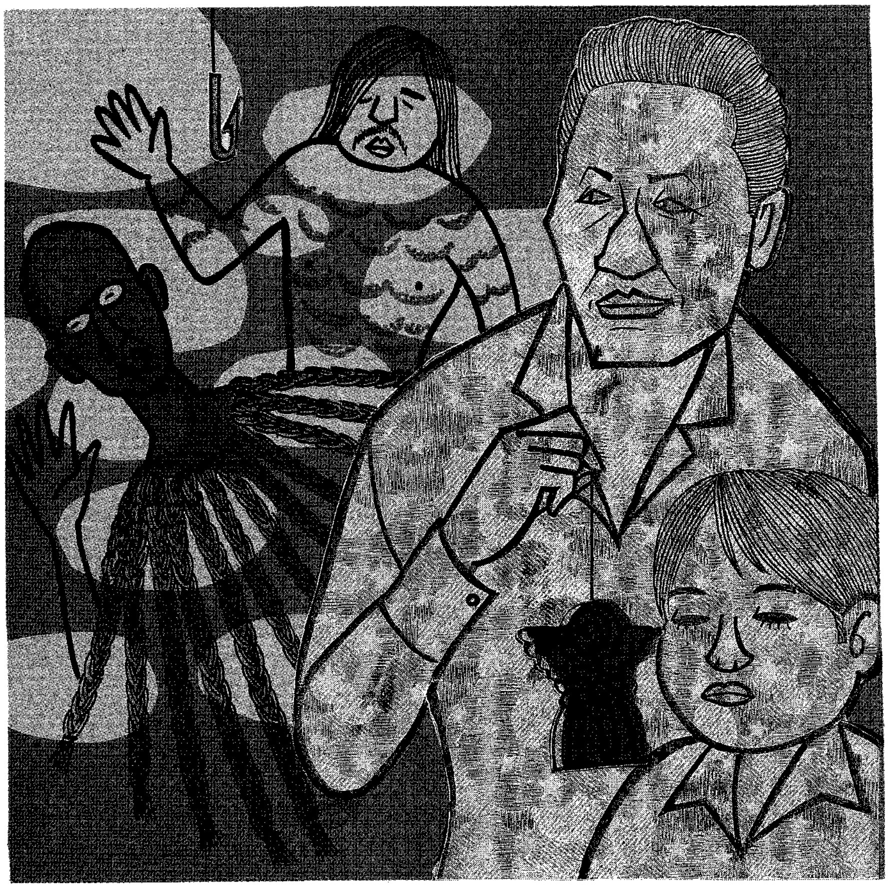
KEEPING THE FAITH

In New York, two boyhood friends now in their thirties—a young, aggressively modernizing rabbi (Ben Stiller) and a quiet, traditional priest (Edward Norton)—fall in love with the woman (Jenna Elfman) they loved as a girl years before. The story of this romantic comedy, concocted by Norton and a college friend, Stuart Blumberg, may be movie-ish, even gimmicky, but scene by scene the film plays well, sometimes extremely well, with lots of goofy and charming detail. In particular, Jenna Elfman has a radiant glow. As a grownup, she's a tough corporate executive with an earnest and soulful side—Jean Arthur may have a successor after all. In his first directorial effort, Norton, an intense young actor, shows a flare for romantic longing and an appreciation of the landscapes and moods of Manhattan. Look for a good running joke about a trading-card series called "Heroes of the Torah"—Jews in dark hats and beards who have been placed on collectors' cards like ballplayers.—*D.D.* (4/24 & 5/1/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.)



Opening May 26, "Kikujiro," written and directed by Takeshi Kitano, who also plays the title character, an ex-gangster on a reluctant journey to find a young boy's mother.

HIROSHI TANABE

MÄDCHEN IN UNIFORM

A willowy young girl (Herthe Thiele) in a fashionable school is unhappy under the harsh, Prussian discipline; she flowers when a sympathetic teacher (Dorothea Wieck) gives her special consideration. Although this consideration is ambiguous and certainly sensual, the teacher is not viewed as decadent, or even naughty; she appears to be on the side of the liberal, humanitarian angels, yet she seems unmistakably lesbian. This legendary film was directed by Leontine Sagon from Christa Winsloe's play "Yesterday and Today"—one of the few occasions in film history when a woman writer's material has also been directed by a woman. This 1932 picture is always described as sensitive, and it is; it's also a rather loaded piece of special pleading. In German.—*P.K.* (Film Forum; May 26-27.)

MICHAEL JORDAN TO THE MAX

At the end of this forty-five-minute IMAX valentine, Michael Jordan declares: "There *will* be a player better than me," but he doesn't really believe it, and neither does the audience. After viewing highlight upon highlight, you become convinced that Jordan didn't so much play basketball as bend the game to his will. The film follows the championship march of the Bulls through the 1998 playoffs, interspersed with his Airness's basic biography: North Carolina, N.B.A. stardom, Nike marketing juggernaut, etc. It's a glossy portrait, without blemish or nuance. There's no mention of intra-team conflicts, or any kind of utterance other than the standard sports-cliché stoicism. What the film does do well is place you courtside and then blast out your eardrums—a dribbling basketball apparently produces a titanic thunder. Noise aside, the spectacle of a seven-story Jordan elevating, double-pumping, and then swishing his jump shot should certainly thrill his legion of fans.—*Michael Agger* (Lincoln Square.)

ROAD TRIP

College boys and girls in a series of raffish sex jokes pinned to a mere clothesline of a plot. There's an erotic prostate exam, an incriminating videotape, a sweet nerd with big ears who gets vamped by a sexually overpowering fat lady, and so on. Entertaining in a semi-contemptible way when you're watching it; immediately forgettable thereafter. With Breckin Meyer, Tom Green, Amy Smart, and DJ Qualls. Written by Todd Phillips and Scot Armstrong; directed by Phillips.—*D.D.* (Chelsea Cinemas, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

SMALL TIME CROOKS

A small-time comedy from Woody Allen, who seems to have shelved, if only temporarily, his studies of anguished human souls, preferring to draw our attention to the sight of human bodies getting into nasty scrapes and even nastier suits. In the new film, Woody himself plays a useless thief who, through no talent of his own, stumbles into money; the overriding purpose of this twist is that we get to see him wearing bilious green shirts, eye-scarring indigo jackets, and sub-Versace belts studded with gold rivets. This alone is worth the price of admission. Alongside Allen are Tracey Ullman, as his loud and triumphal wife, Hugh Grant, as the smoothie who is paid to educate her, Jon Lovitz, in a delightful but underused supporting role, and Elaine May, who slips the movie into her handbag and walks away with it. Parts of the plot creak and sag a little, but the middle section, in which our heroes bust a gut trying to spend their earnings, holds wonderfully firm; in the hands of a less savvy director it would have turned into an easy laugh at the flounderings of the nouveaux riches, but Allen keeps it sweet, hinting gently that the rich of any vintage can be a drag.—*A.L.* (5/22/00) (Beekman, East 85th Street, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Union Square, and Village East Cinemas.)

TIME CODE

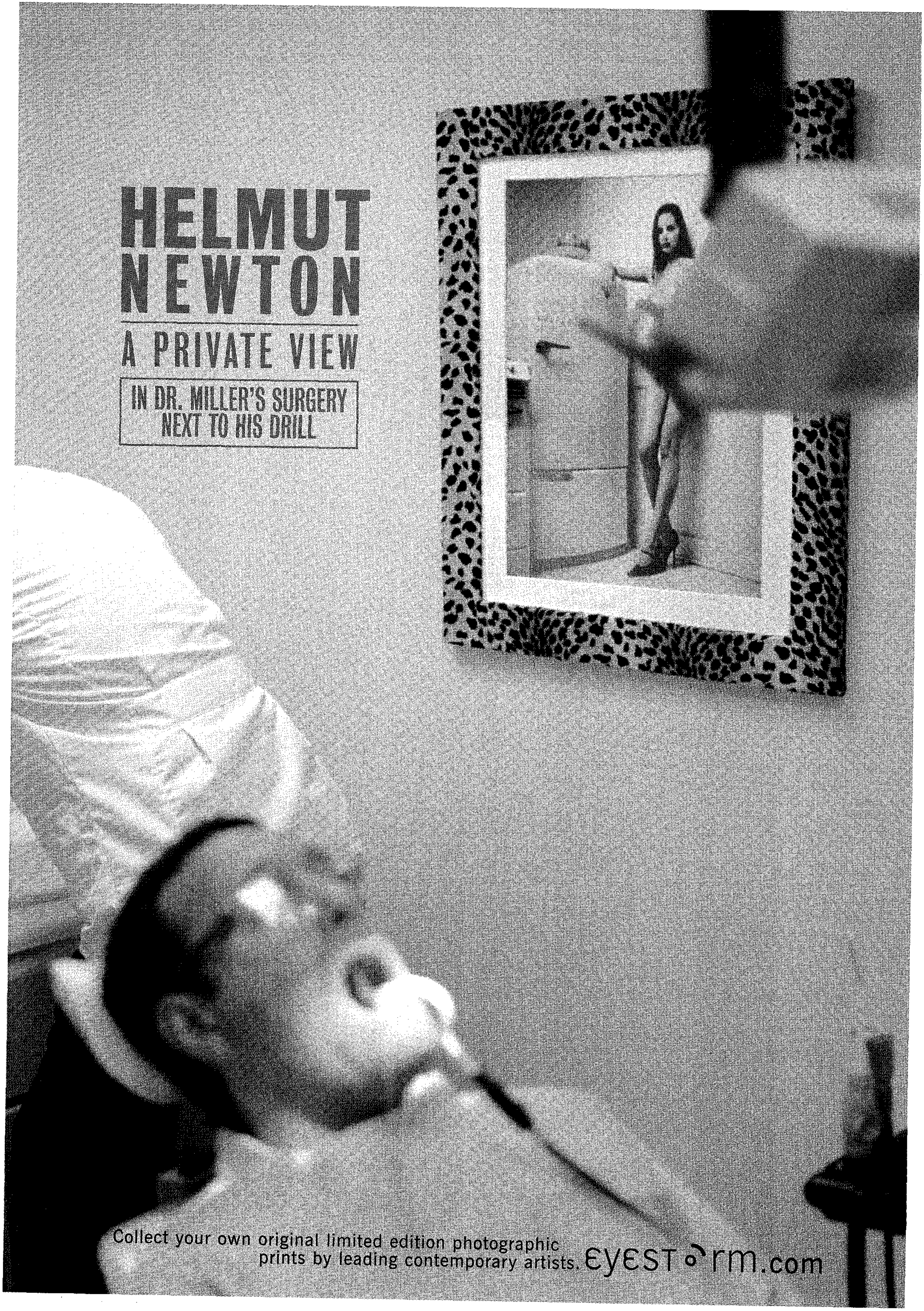
Mike Figgis's new feature is a film that will launch a thousand theses. He splits the screen into four quadrants, and each section shows a continuous ninety-three-minute take, shot in synchronized real time with four handheld digital cameras. The big new idea is that the audience must construct the narrative by "privileging" certain parts of the "text," but if you've ever stood in front of a bank of televisions you've probably already gone beyond montage. Figgis knows he's being pretentious, and he cleverly undercuts this with self-aware asides and frequent comic interludes. The cameras track separate characters who all end up at the same place: an independent film company called Red Mullet Productions. Some quadrants fare better than others: Jeanne Tripplehorn spends most of the film agonizing in her limo, and, thankfully, doesn't require much attention. Saffron Burrows visits her shrink, but she's hardly given any sound, and her story languishes. Stellan Skarsgård is superb as the alcoholic, visionary head of the film company, and it's his affair with Salma Hayek which creates the fireworks—as they couple, so do their screens. It's hard work being a postmodern voyeur, but it's also a lot more fun that it sounds.—*M.A.* (Angelika Film Center, Chelsea West, 84th Street Sixplex, and 64th and 2nd.)

U-571

A lovably traditional and competent submarine action movie. In 1942, an American crew with Bill Paxton as the skipper and Matthew McConaughey as the executive officer undertakes to steal an Enigma coding machine from a wounded German U-boat. Much of the plot is given over to the submarine-warfare tropes that have served movies well for sixty years: the testing of a young officer (McConaughey) in combat, the terror of life below during a depth-charge attack by a German destroyer, the single functioning torpedo that has to be aimed perfectly, and so on. But the director, Jonathan Mostow, who showed a talent for shot-by-shot continuity and suspense in his first film, "Breakdown" (1997), demonstrates even greater skill here, and one is caught up in the impossible feats, rescues, and attacks. With disciplined performances by Harvey Keitel, Jake Weber, Jon Bon Jovi, Jack Noseworthy, and many others. Screenplay by Mostow, Sam Montgomery, and David Ayer.—*D.D.* (5/15/00) (Chelsea Cinemas, Coronet Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Empire 25, Kips Bay Theatre, Orpheum VII, Union Square, and Waverly.)

UP AT THE VILLA

The new film by Phillip and Belinda Haas ("Angels and Insects") plays as smoothly as aged wine, but the material, adapted from a Somerset Maugham novella, substitutes worldliness for drama, and the Haases seem not to realize that there's something wrong with that. Visiting the Anglo-American expatriate community in Florence in 1938, a beautiful young English widow, Mary Panton (Kristin Scott Thomas), has to choose among three lovers: a buttoned-up-tight British aristocrat and diplomat (James Fox) who is much older than she, a young and penniless Austrian refugee (Jeremy Davies)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who is given to self-dramatizing poses, and an American playboy (Sean Penn) who has a taste for danger and truly loves her. Should Mary choose comfort or excitement? This is a question that requires glamour, wit, and perhaps melodramatic excitement, not glum refinement. The Haases treat Maugham's skillfully wrought kitsch as if it were sombre moral exploration; they take the fun out of it without achieving anything serious. With Anne Bancroft in a poorly written role as a cynical American married to a fabulously wealthy Italian prince. Shot outside Siena, in a gorgeous estate doubling for a Florentine villa.—*D.D.* (5/15/00) (Angelika Film Center, Empire 25, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE VIRGIN SUICIDES
Sofia Coppola's directorial début is a seventies period piece about five blond suicidal sisters (the Lisbons) and the young men who love them. It's hard to brighten suicide, and even harder to make it funny and mysterious at the same time, and this adaptation of Jeffrey Eugenides' novel veers awkwardly between comedy and fable. Coppola concentrates mostly on re-creating the mood of the book: the fantastic intensity of adolescence, when certain girls (and the desperate acts they inspire) can acquire the status of legend. We are told of the unravelling of the sisters from the boys' perspective (Giovanni Ribisi does the narration), but the film comes most alive when it goes inside the girls' hothouse environment: the handwritten notes, purple-inked doodles, and slumber-party décor are rendered perfectly. James Woods and Kathleen Turner turn in terrifyingly accurate performances as the overprotective Catholic parents of the Lisbon clan, but the overall atmosphere doesn't seem menacing enough: is being forced to burn your favorite "Kiss" album really reason to end it all?—*M.A.* (BAM Rose Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, East 86th Street Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, Lincoln Square, and Village Theatre VII.)

ALSO PLAYING

AMERICAN PSYCHO (4/17/00)
59th Street East Cinema, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, and Village Theatre VII.

THE BIG KAHUNA
BAM Rose Cinemas, Beekman, and Union Square.

EAST-WEST
BAM Rose Cinemas and Paris.

THE FILTH AND THE FURY (4/3/00)
Film Forum.

THE HISTORY OF LUMINOUS MOTION
Angelika Film Center and Eastside Playhouse.

LOVE AND BASKETBALL
84th Street Sixplex, 42nd Street E Walk, Kips Bay Theatre, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, Sutton 1 and 2, and Village Theatre VII.

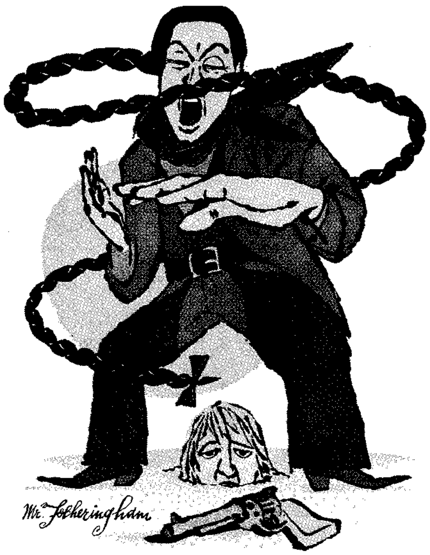
NEW EVE
Cinema Village.

SPIKE AND MIKE'S ANIMATION FESTIVAL
Quad Cinema.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

Unless noted, call 777-FILM for show times.

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770).
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Chelsea West, 333 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363).
Coronet Cinemas, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
East 86th Street Cinemas, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
Empire 25, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave. (398-3939).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.



Jackie Chan and Owen Wilson in an East-meets-Western, "Shanghai Noon."

42nd Street E Walk, 42nd St. near Eighth Ave.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Kips Bay Theatre, Second Ave. at 32nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St.
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St. (688-3800).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
The Screening Room, 54 Varick St. (334-2100).
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
64th and 2nd, Second Ave. at 64th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
Union Square, Broadway at 13th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly 1 and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

REVIVALS, CLASSICS, ETC.

Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE
35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (718-784-0077)—The films of director Alan Rudolph. May 27 at 2: "The Moderns" (1988). ♦ May 27 at 4:30: "Equinox" (1993). ♦ May 28 at 2: "Afterglow" (1997). ♦ May 28 at 4:30: "Breakfast of Champions" (1999).

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES
32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110)—May 25 at 8: "Fresh Film," a collection of new experimental work. ♦ May 26 at 9:30: "Vampyr" (1931-1932, Carl Dreyer; in German and French). ♦ May 28 at 5: "The Gold Rush" (1923, Charlie Chaplin). ♦ May 28 at 7: "Intolerance" (1916, D. W. Griffith).

BAM ROSE CINEMAS
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770)—All show times are at 4:30, 7, and 9:30 (with an additional 2 P.M. show on weekends) unless otherwise noted. May 24 at 8: "White Shadows in the South Seas" (1928, W. S. Van Dyke). ♦ May 25: "Heaven Can Wait" (1943, Ernst Lubitsch). ♦ May 26: "Guantanamera" (1994, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Juan Carlos Tabio; in Spanish). ♦ May 27-28: "The Princess Bride" (1987, Rob Reiner). ♦ May 29: "Barbarella" (1968, Roger Vadim). ♦ May 30: "A Midsummer Night's Dream" (1959, Jirí Trnka).

FILM FORUM
W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—A three-week retrospective of lesbian cult films. May 26-27: "Mädchen in Uniform" (†) and "The Children's Hour" (1961, William Wyler). ♦ May 28: "Forbidden Love" (1992, Aerlyn Weissman) and "Paris Was a Woman" (1995, Greta Schiller). ♦ May 30: "Go Fish" (1994, Rose Troche) and "The Watermelon Woman" (1997, Cheryl Dunye). ♦ The films of Clara Bow. May 29: "Hula" (1927, Victor Fleming) and "The Wild Party" (1929, Dorothy Arzner).

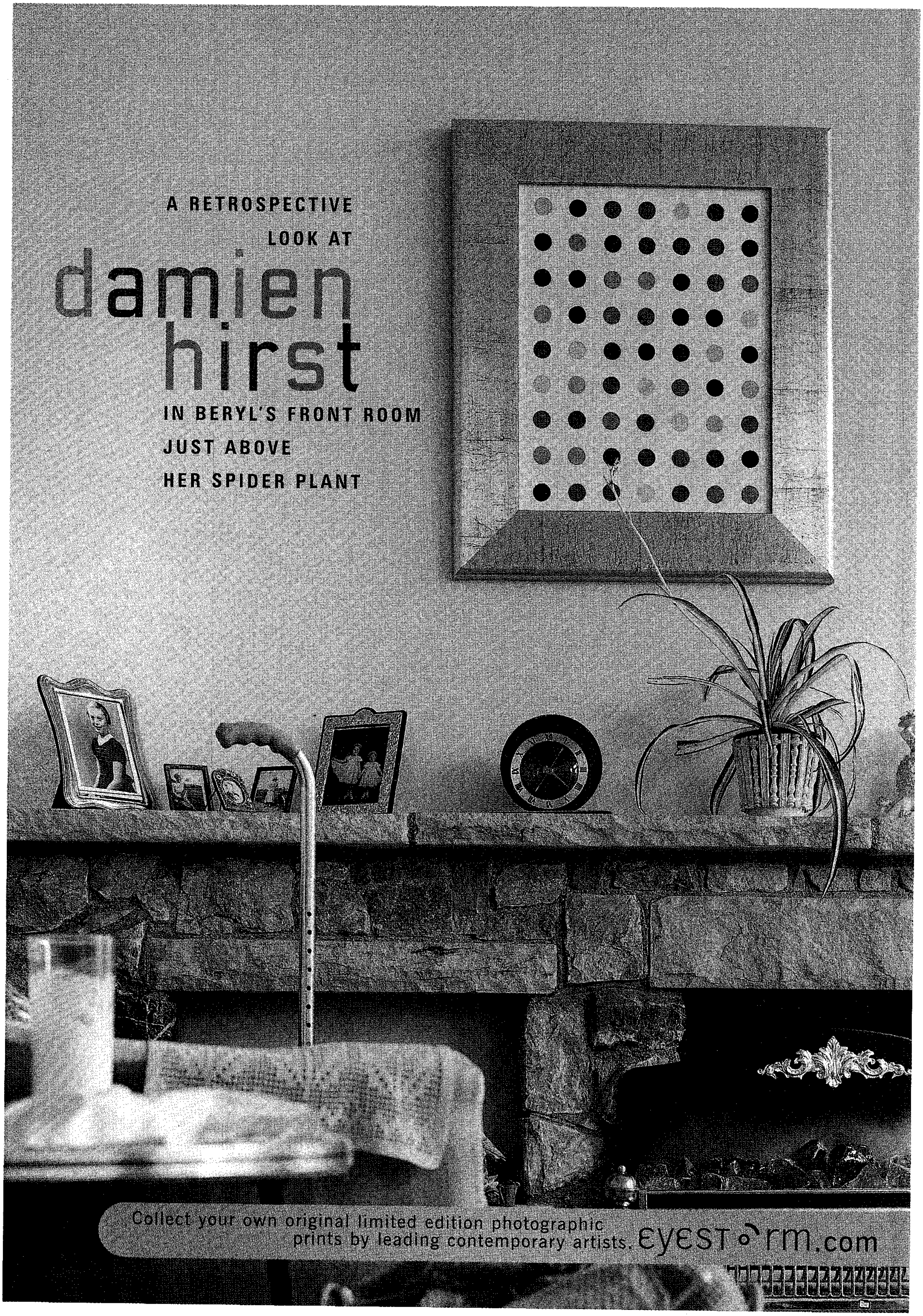
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—May 25 at 6: "Ruins" (1999, Jesse Lerner). ♦ "Home Movies," a retrospective. May 26 at 7:30: "Porch Glider" (1970, James Herbert), "Mr. Kenneth Marvin's Wedding" (1914), "Mom and Dad's Wedding April 23, 1938" (1938), and "Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Home Movie" (1940). ♦ May 27 at 2: "Futility" (1992, Greta Snider) and "To Catch a Glimpse" (1997, Jean Carlomusto). ♦ Films from the Library of Congress. May 27 at 2: "42nd Street" (1933, Lloyd Bacon). ♦ May 27 at 5: "Footlight Parade" (1933, Bacon). ♦ May 28 at 2: "Employees' Entrance" (1933, Roy Del Ruth). ♦ May 28 at 5: "I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang" (1932, Mervyn Le Roy).

THE SCREENING ROOM
54 Varick St. (334-2100)—Through June 8: The golden age of the MGM musical. May 25-26 at 4 and 8: "On the Town" (1949, Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen). ♦ May 25-26 at 6 and 10: "Singin' in the Rain" (1952, Kelly and Donen). ♦ May 27-29 at 3 and 7:45: "Gigi" (1958, Vincente Minnelli). ♦ May 27-29 at 5:15 and 10: "Meet Me in St. Louis" (1944, Minnelli). ♦ May 30 at 9:50: "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers" (1954, Donen). ♦ May 30 at 7:10: "Anchors Aweigh" (1945, George Sidney). ♦ Blaxploitation films. May 26-27 at midnight: "Across 110th Street" (1972, Barry Shear).

SYMPHONY SPACE
2537 Broadway (864-1414)—Films from Africa. May 30 at 7: "Macadam Tribu" (1996, José Laplaine; in French). ♦ May 30 at 8:45: "Tableau Ferraille" (1997, Moussa Sene Absa; in French and Wolof).

WALTER READE THEATRE
Lincoln Center (875-5600)—Through June 1: The Sixth African Film Festival. Highlights listed here. May 24 at 7:45: "Bye Bye Africa" (1998, Mahamat Saleh Haroun; in Chadian and French). ♦ May 25 at 7: "Macadam Tribu" (1996, José Laplaine; in French). ♦ May 26 at 7:15: "Le Franc" (1994, Djibril Diop Mambéty; in French and Wolof) and "The Little Girl Who Sold the Sun" (1999, Mambéty; in French and Wolof). ♦ May 26 at 9:30: "Hot Irons" (1999, Andrew Dosunmu). ♦ May 27 at 4: "Silmande Tourbillion" (1998, Pierre Yameogo; in French and Wolof). ♦ May 27 at 7:45: "Barbecue-Pejo" (1999, Jean Odoutan; in French and Fon). ♦ May 28 at 9:45: "TGV" (1997, Moussa Torré; in French and Wolof). ♦ May 29 at 8: "Fragments of Life" (1999, François L. Woukoache; in French).

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM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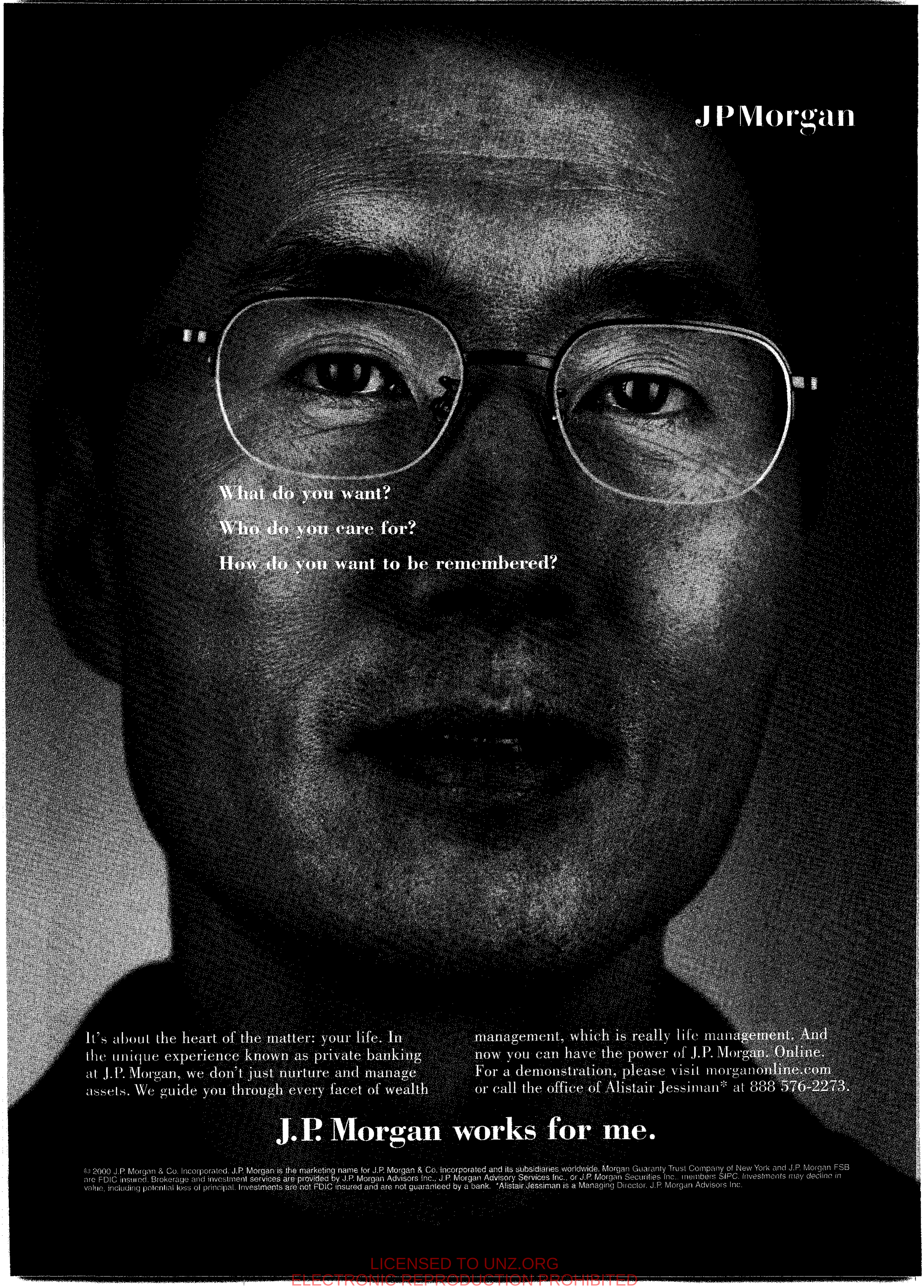

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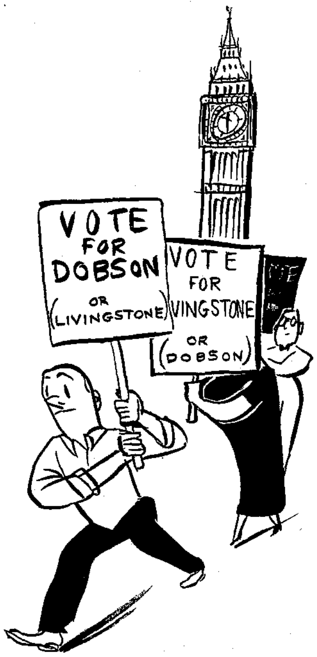
COMMENT
THE LESSON OF RED KEN

Earlier this month, for the first time ever, the citizens of London went to the polls and elected themselves a mayor. This unprecedented event was little noted in the United States. Americans who read the inside pages of the big papers will be aware that London's voters, by picking a maverick who had been thrown out of the ruling Labour Party for running as an independent, stuck a gleeful Cockney finger in the eye of Prime Minister Tony Blair. To summarize the tabloidish high points: Kenneth "Red Ken" Livingstone, cheeky hero of London's Loony Left, trounces hapless, bearded Labour draftee Frank Dobson and skirt-chasing Conservative Steve Norris in rebuke to Blairite control-freakery after Labour hopeful slash movie queen Glenda Jackson quits and original Tory nominee slash potboiler novelist Lord Jeffrey Archer flames out in gamy sex scandal. Great copy. But seeing this story solely from the personality angle is like handicapping the Grand National by judging the jockeys without mentioning horses or hurdles.

The real novelty of the election was the way it was conducted: by a kind of instant runoff. Under London's ingenious arrangement, each voter gets to name both a first choice *and* a second one. If somebody wins an outright majority, that's it. If not, then all but the top two candidates are eliminated; the second preferences of the eliminated candidates' voters are counted up; the second-choice votes for the two finalists are added to their first-choice votes; and the one with the highest total wins. This is what in fact happened. In the first-choice voting, Livingstone got thirty-nine per cent—a smaller share, by the way, than Ruth Messinger got when she had her head handed to her by Mayor Giuliani in the 1997 New York City election. Ten other candidates—three major, seven minor—split the remainder, with Norris, the Tory, coming in second, at twenty-seven per cent. In the second-preference vote, Red Ken got another twelve per cent—just enough for a bare majority—while Norris picked up an additional thirteen, for a total of forty per cent.


VOTE FOR DOBSON OR LIVINGSTONE
VOTE FOR VINGSTONE OR DOBSON

TOM BACHTELL

This was a little too complicated for the American press. For example, the *Times*—New York, not London—simply reported that Livingstone had won "with an estimated 51 per cent of the vote," making it sound as if the voters liked Red Ken better than all his opponents put together.

It may seem pedantic to harp on what looks like mere procedure, but this is one case where the process is the forest. Red Ken is only a tree. The election he happened to win is part of a profound constitutional upheaval that, far more than any Third Way policy tinkerings, will be Tony Blair's lasting legacy. The only aspect of this upheaval to have received much attention over here is the abolition of hereditary membership in the House of Lords. That change, for all its "Masterpiece Theatre" appeal, is less important than the creation of new regional parliaments in Scotland and Wales that are chosen in semi-proportional elections. Most of the members of these parliaments represent individual districts, but, in addition, a few extra seats are distributed among the parties according to their proportion of the over-all total vote. That way, geographically dispersed and/or smaller parties get a share of representation, too. A similar scheme was used last year in the balloting for Britain's delegates to the European parliament in Brussels, and a modest move toward proportionality has been proposed for the British Parliament itself. London had a city-council election on the day it elected Red Ken, and there, too, an innovative system was employed. The two biggest parties swept the district-based seats. But, thanks to proportionally distributed extra seats, the council has a fair sprinkling of Liberal Democrats and Greens as well.

All this ought to be of interest to Americans, because our electoral system is based on an eighteenth-century British model—single-district, winner-take-all elections decided by simple pluralities—that Britain is having second thoughts about. For Americans, London's instant-runoff idea presents especially intriguing possibilities. It's a way of opening up politics to a wider variety of voices without sacrificing the clarity and energy of a single directly elected executive. As a third-party or independent candidate, you can campaign hard without the risk of being a spoiler and handing the election to the candidate most hostile to your views. As a citizen, you can vote your heart without giving up your shot at picking the lesser evil. London's voting system allows the electorate to speak far more subtly and precisely than ours does. Red Ken won fair and square, because he was at least barely acceptable to a majority. He was the people's choice, but not their first choice. The voters gave him the job, but they were able to specify that they were giving it to him grudgingly. And, if there's one thing American voters would dearly love to be able to express, it's grudgingness.

—*Hendrik Hertzberg*

DEPT. OF GASTRONOMY

WILL TURNIPS REPLACE ROSES ON THE WHITE HOUSE LAWN?

Though decades may pass before historians determine definitively whether Bill Clinton was constitutionally more susceptible to the seductive possibilities of sex or food, during the latter *canard boiteux* phase of his Presidency it seems that the surest way to arouse his enthusiasm is to serve him dessert. When public duty or other deeds of self-sacrifice—say, political fund-raising—have taken him to northern California, he has often yielded to the charms of Alice Waters, the guiding spirit of Chez Panisse, in Berkeley, the wellspring of late-twentieth-century American cuisine. (Full disclosure: I've received reports of these liaisons directly from Alice, who until not long ago was married to my brother.) Unless she's cooking at home, Alice doesn't actually spend a lot of time in front of the stove these days, devoting much of her energy instead to evangelizing on behalf of sustainable (i.e., organic) agriculture as a means of "building community," fostering "an atmosphere of caring and sharing," and nourishing "our most humane values"—noble, cuddly sentiments (there will always be a Berkeley) that, of course, have a Clintonian rhetorical resonance.

On a few occasions, Alice has cooked dinner for one or both halves of the First Couple in the San Francisco home of Susie Tompkins Buell, a founder of the Esprit clothing company, who counts the Democratic National Committee among her favorite charities. During the 1996 reëlection campaign, after the leader of the free world forced himself to eat every bite of a meal of fresh anchovies and green-olive tapenade on toasts, grilled artichoke hearts, squash-blossom fritters, Bodega Bay King salmon with Meyer-lemon vinaigrette, braised lamb pistou with summer vegetables, garden salad, wild blackberries, and baked stuffed peaches, Alice came to the dining room to take a bow and said, "Mr. President, cooking for you is an excruciating pleasure." To which he replied, "You know, that sounds a lot like my job."

In early March, the Democratic National Committee informed Mrs. Buell that the President was again coming to town and suggested that if she were to invite over an élite group of stalwart donors he would be happy to join them. Again, Alice was in the kitchen. Business—specifically, a fund-raiser for Senator Dianne Feinstein—prevented Clinton from arriving on schedule, and by the time he finally showed up the dozen or so other guests had already put away their Dungeness-crab salads with garden white asparagus and watercress mayonnaise and were well into their portions of Petaluma-duck leg braised with new garlic and fava beans with rosemary noodles. According to Mrs. Buell, the President seemed "very tired" at first, but then dessert was served—pecan ice cream and warm chocolate fondant in which was planted a tiny banner, calligraphically inscribed "The Presidential Sweet"—and he perked up. He couldn't eat the fondant because he's allergic to chocolate, but he polished off the ice cream and some Sicilian-style candied fruits and marzipan, and thus was able to sustain about three hours of animated chatter.

At one point, Mrs. Buell invited Alice to pull up a chair between her and the President. As the conversation segued from the Pakistan-India conflict to this year's Presidential race and on to Clinton's environmental record, Alice interjected, "I have an idea. Why not demonstrate your concern for the environment in the most visible way? Why not create an organic vegetable garden on the White House lawn?" She invoked the symbolic importance of Second World War victory gardens and Thomas Jefferson's experiments at Monticello (where the garden included fifty varieties of pea, thirty-one kinds of cabbage, fifteen different lettuces, and ten varieties of turnip), and pretty soon Clinton and everyone else present were nodding in agreement. "Send me the seeds, Alice, and we'll do that," he vowed. And Alice (who has admitted to me, "I'm not really a gardener—I'm just a picker") got a little carried away and said, "Not only will I send you the seeds—I'll come and plant them, and then I'll come and harvest from the garden and cook for you at the White House." Aiming an index finger and smiling, Clinton said, "You do that, Alice!"

Since that evening, there has been a friendly exchange of correspondence on Chez Panisse and White House stationery, though not, it turns out, a perfectly meshed meeting of minds. In late March, Alice wrote, "Mr. President, plant that garden on the White House grounds! . . . I can think of no more powerful way to ground your legacy than to leave behind a kitchen garden and the compost pile to nourish it. . . . You said to me, 'Send me the seeds!' The seeds are on the way. . . . The timing is perfect. Tomorrow it will be spring and the Department of Agriculture's new organic standards are pending."

When Alice didn't get an immediate

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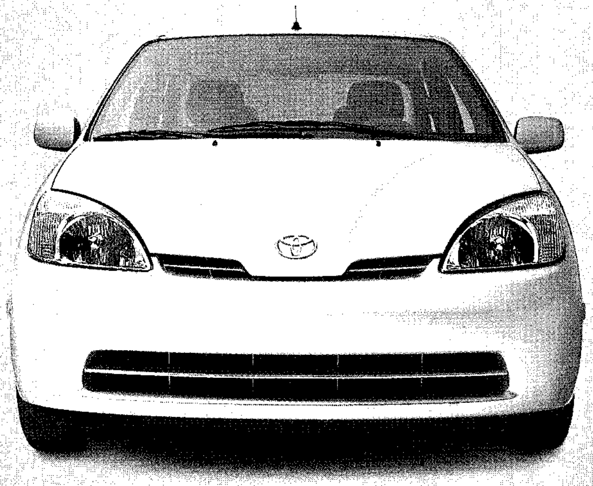

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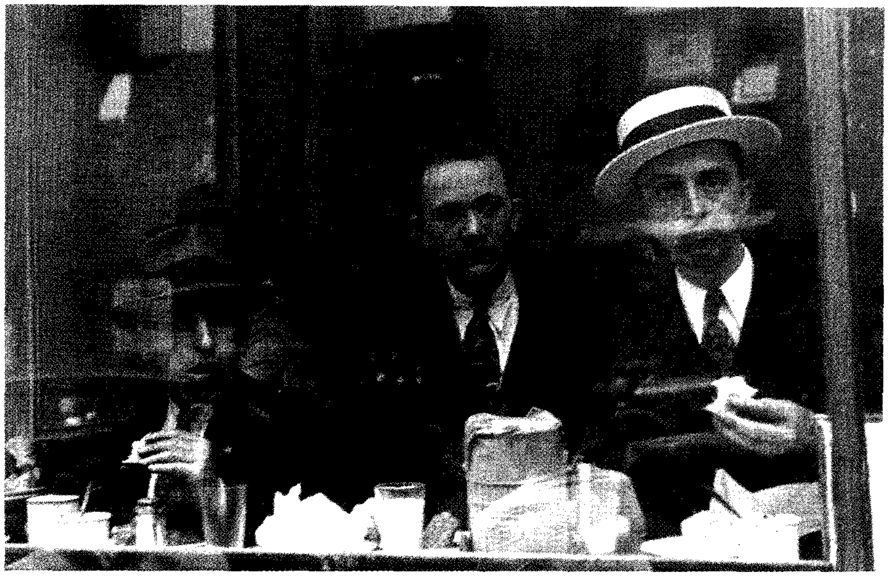
reply, she sent copies of her hortative missive to a circle of influential friends, among them journalists and politicians. Senator Barbara Boxer, of California, wrote the President endorsing the idea, as did a woman in Connecticut named Martha Stewart, and, finally, late last month, he wrote back a letter signed "Sincerely, Bill" that had the flavor of a polite brushoff: "Thanks for your suggestion about planting a kitchen garden on the White House grounds. Since I took office, Hillary and I have been interested in the idea of growing fresh herbs and vegetables here at the White House. But we decided that an informal kitchen garden would not be in keeping with the formal gardens of the White House and the historic planting guidelines developed in the 1930s. Instead of having a kitchen garden on the White House grounds, Hillary requested that the National Park Service plant and maintain a vegetable garden on the roof of the Executive Residence. In addition, the East Garden has been planted with garden herbs that our chefs use for our meals, and the National Park Service maintains a compost recycling pile at our greenhouse."

Alice waited a couple of weeks, consulted members of her brain trust, and the other day dispatched another letter. "I apologize for being so insistent," she wrote—a toning down of a phrase that in an earlier draft read, "While I do not wish to seem to be hectoring you and Hillary"—"but I have the impression that you and Hillary may have made up your minds about a different garden than the one I have been proposing." What she envisions is not "an informal garden" but "a national monument" that could fit right in at Versailles, with espaliered fruit trees, edible topiary, the works—an aesthetically proper but fully functional kitchen garden. Nor does Alice seem willing to settle for something hidden away on the roof—where, amid "security enhancements" (anti-aircraft artillery?) that the Secret Service acknowledges but declines to comment upon specifically, a small collection of potted tomatoes, squash, cucumbers, and sweet and hot peppers is now being cultivated in a manner that would not meet the Department of Agriculture's proposed new organic-growing guidelines.

President Clinton wasn't flagrantly dissembling when, in his letter, he referred to the compost recycling monitored by the National Park Service, but he neglected to mention that the pile is a couple of miles from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. The executive compost heap Alice fantasizes about would itself be a monument, of proportions sufficient to provide a highly visible and aromatic backdrop during outdoor press conferences and photo ops.



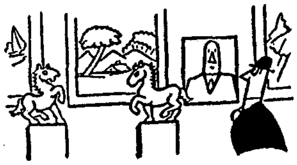
Lunchroom window, New York, 1929, by Walker Evans.

COURTESY METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Is there room on the White House grounds for such an improvement? Well, there's more than eighteen acres to work with, so it could presumably be squeezed in. Does sufficient time remain during the Clinton Presidency to come up with a suitable design and plant the seeds? It's a prospect the Commander-in-Chief can contemplate while enjoying that lush and symbolic piece of vegetation, installed during the Bush Administration, which somehow *did* comport with "historic guidelines"—the White House putting green.

—*Mark Singer*

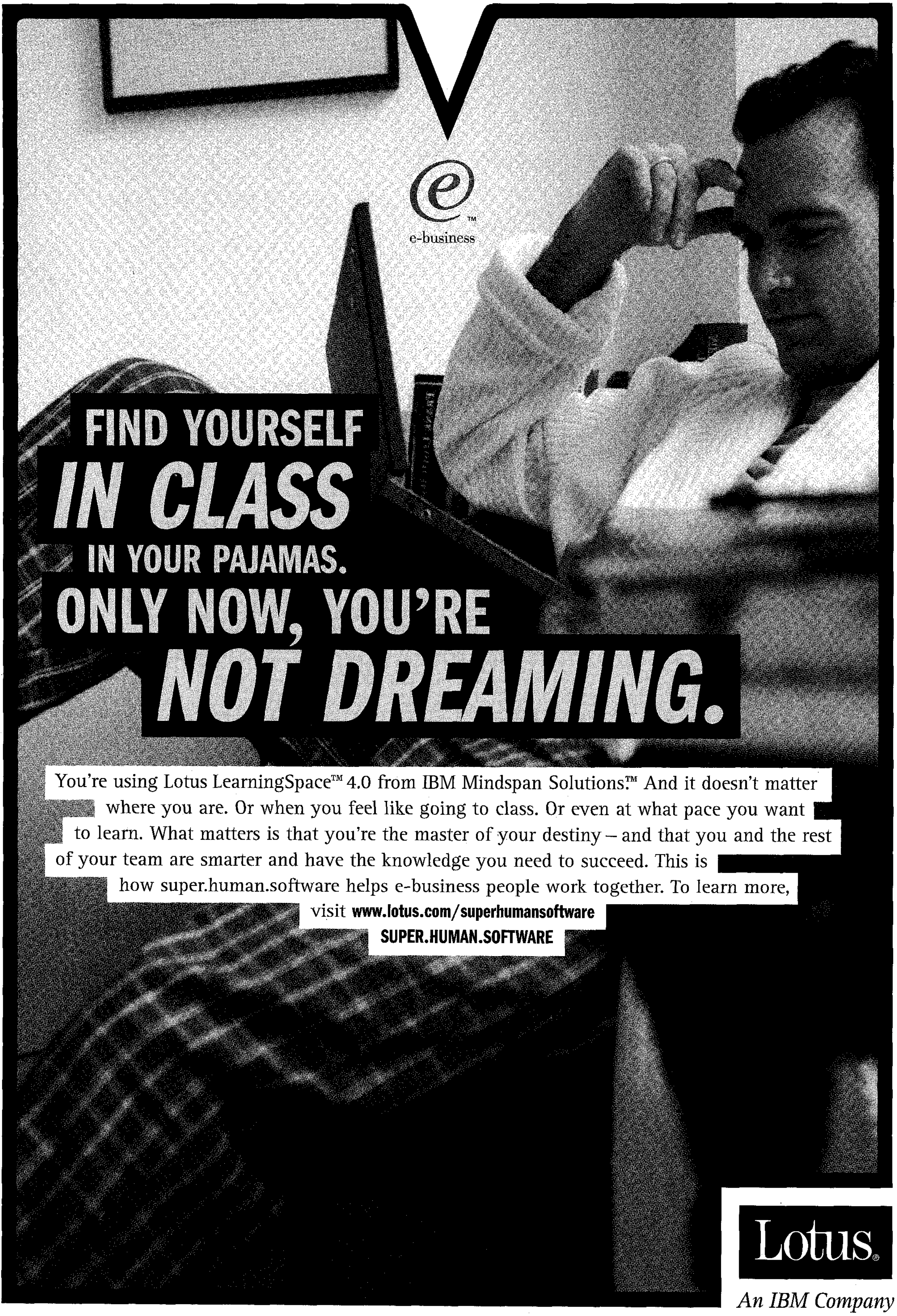
DEPT. OF RECALL
A FAMILIAR FACE ON THE WALL OF THE MET



Paula Vlachos says that she watches the Charlie Rose show "religiously," but, even so, she never expected to witness anyone rising from the dead during a broadcast. One day earlier this month, though, during a segment about the Metropolitan Museum's recent Walker Evans retrospective, Vlachos suddenly saw on the screen the face of her father, who died more than forty years ago. "I jumped out of my skin and screamed, 'That's my dad!'" Vlachos, who is sixty-five and works for an electrical contractor, said last week, speaking by telephone from her office, in Astoria, Queens.

The picture that Vlachos had seen was one of Evans's candid shots of anonymous New Yorkers going about their business; taken in 1929, it shows Vlachos's father, Nicholas Sclavakis, sitting in a diner beside two other men, gazing out the storefront window. Sclavakis is wearing a fedora and has a mouthful of sandwich, while one of the other men wears a straw boater, and the third is bareheaded; they all look as preoccupied as any would-be workingman might have at the start of the Depression.

Vlachos wanted to know where she could buy a book containing the print, so she called the Met and was put through to Jeff Rosenheim, the curator of the show. "She said she had been to that diner with her father when she was a child," Rosenheim said. "I knew from the artist's papers that Evans believed it to be a diner on Forty-fourth Street, opposite Grand Central, and she told me that her father used to go all the time to a diner on Forty-fourth opposite Grand Central." The man on the far right in the picture is one of Sclavakis's best



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friends, a dentist who used to visit the Sclavakis family's home, on Twenty-sixth Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenues. "Dad had a lot of his friends around to have Turkish coffee and play cards," Vlachos recalled last week. "I don't remember the name, but I certainly remember the straw hat."

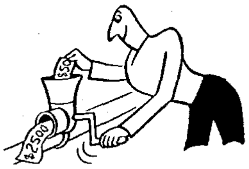
At the time the photograph was taken, Vlachos said, her father was twenty-nine years old. "He came from Turkey," she explained. "He was Greek, but he was born in Constantinople." The Sclavakis whom Evans captured had been living in the United States for around a decade, working mostly in restaurants. In the thirties, when Vlachos was a young girl, her father went into the fur trade, but he eventually returned to the restaurant business, and for a while operated his own diner, across the street from St. Vincent's Hospital.

Sclavakis's choice of business is a particularly pleasing coincidence to Rosenheim. "One of the things that Evans could see so clearly was that we lived in a fast culture, and that fast food and the concept of the diner are quintessentially American phenomena," he said. "Yes, there are bistros, and there are pubs, but in them you don't generally sit in the window and stuff your face and watch the passing stream of humanity."

Last weekend, just before the Evans show moved to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Vlachos went to the Met to see her father up close, along with her brother, James Sclavakis, who flew in from Florida with his wife for the weekend just to view the photograph. "At the museum, I was telling everybody in the room, 'That's my dad,' " Vlachos said. "Everyone asked us lots of questions. We were all transported back to the past." She bought a copy of the exhibition catalogue, and says her son is going to scan the picture into his computer so that she can make copies for herself and the rest of the family. "I am going to put one in my room, over my bed," she said. "I was only twenty-three when he died, and my brother was three years younger. Seeing the picture was almost as if I were reliving a time back there, when I wasn't even born. It was a very good, and strange, and sad feeling."

—*Rebecca Mead*

DOT-COM DEPT.
MASTERS OF THEIR DOMAINS



When Peter Rutten resigned as the head of Wired Books, in 1997, the first thing he did was sit down and think about what kind of on-line business he might want to start. The second thing he did was reserve a set of domain names. Rutten is one of many media professionals who have been quietly snapping up what they hope will one day become prime on-line real estate.

"Almost everybody I know in the media world has one or two or three domain names," Rutten says. An on-line company's Web address is equivalent to a bricks-and-mortar company's street address. If it's a good one, customers will come. To prospectors in the race to stake out rich territory on the Internet, the domain name is a deed of sorts. And it's cheap—only seventy dollars to buy a name and hold it for two years.

In the same way that, strolling in Manhattan, you might wonder who owns those weeded-over parcels of land wedged between multimillion-dollar skyscrapers and what grand plans they're silently cultivating, you never can tell who owns the really good vacant lots in cyberspace. If the owners don't publicize their holdings, the details remain buried in vast domain-name registration databases. But typing the names of some select media players into the search engine of one of these databases, NetworkSolutions.com, produced interesting results. Nicholas Butterworth, who co-founded the on-line music hub SonicNet, which was recently sold to MTV, owns the domain name futurestage.com. Newyorkmedia.com has been reserved by Johanna Bennett, of Dow Jones News Service. And forca.com belongs to Louis Rossetto and his wife Jane Metcalfe, the co-founders of *Wired*. When he was asked to account for his dormant domain, Butterworth laughed and said, "Well, I guess there are no secrets in cyberspace." He declined to explain what kind of Web site futurestage.com would be. "I'm not doing anything with it now," he said. "In fact, I've never done anything besides register it."

Dan Okrent, an editor-at-large for Time, Inc., has purchased dearauthor.com, favoriteauthor.com, favoriteauthors.com, and talktotheauthor.com. "I have a business idea that I may someday pursue," Okrent said. "I don't want to go into any detail, really, because then I might actually have to do it. But I thought of these names when I was sitting in Cape Cod. The whole process took about forty-five minutes one evening last August."

Rutten adds that the instability of on-line careers makes long-range backup plans very important. "Now I am gainfully employed," he says, "but after I resigned from Wired Books there was an entrepreneurial period." This period produced three domains: ask-an-agent.com (reserved for his wife, a literary agent), waplines.com (reserved to capitalize on wireless-access protocol, which sends Internet data to cell phones and other portable devices), and the-examiner.com (reserved for a notion about wireless local news delivery). To date, none of these have been activated. "But that doesn't mean that I won't decide to use them at some point," Rutten says.

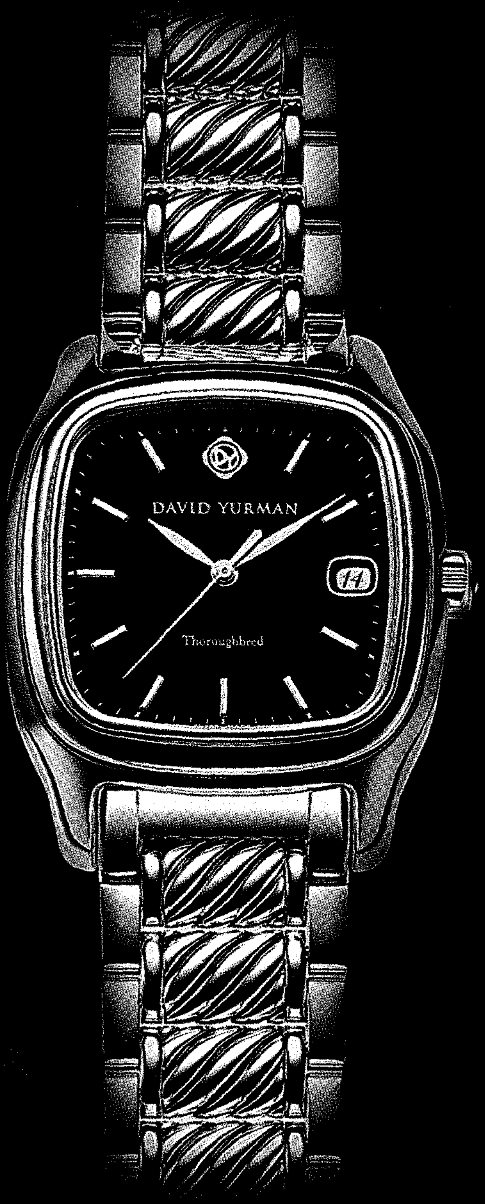
Some media types were more reluctant to discuss their domains. Louis Rossetto did explain that forca.com derives from the Portuguese phrase *força da imaginação*, which means "power of imagination," and he conceded that he and his wife have also reserved forcadaimaginacao.com. However, he would not confirm or deny rumors circulating on-line that the names would be used for a magazine about contemporary spirituality or, alternatively, an investment firm.

Even if names like waplines.com and dearauthor.com don't become the amazon.coms of the future, few of their owners regret having registered them. "It works as sort of a little anchor that allows you to keep thinking about certain parts of the on-line world," Rutten says.

"The real question isn't whether or not you rush to reserve the domain name," Okrent says. "The real question is what happens when the two years are up and you have to pay seventy bucks to renew it." Even big thinkers keep track of the small change.

—*Ben Greenman*

DAVID YURMAN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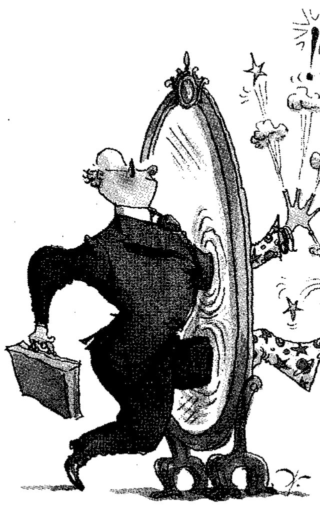
THE FINANCIAL PAGE
THE VISIONARIES OF THE NEW ECONOMY DREAM ON

Two bald Swedes took the stage at lunchtime in the atrium of the Sony Building with the insouciance of people getting lots of money to peddle banalities. "Congratulations!" Kjell Nordström told the crowd of onlookers. Wearing what looked like a Prada hoodie and Oliver Peoples eyeglasses, he raised his fist slowly above his head, like John Carlos at the 1968 Olympics. "This is the age of capitalist triumph!" he declared. We've taken a "quantum leap," he went on, into a new realm where workers own the means of production and software geeks are now rock stars. After all, he asked, isn't Jerry Hall dating Paul Allen? Nordstrom's partner, Jonas Ridderstråle, said we have the freedom "to know, to do, to go, and to be" whatever we want, and so companies will have to figure out what makes us "mad, sad, and glad." The key to business today, Nordström added, is not economies of scale but "economies of soul." And to thrive in this environment, he concluded, you have to come out and show the world "just how funky you really are."

With friends like these, the New Economy doesn't need enemies. And it has *lots* of friends like these. "Funky Business," the new book by these smooth-shaven Swedes, shares its digital utopianism with a groaning shelf of visionary manifestos. "The Cluetrain Manifesto," an oddly sweet book, promises "the end of business as usual," arguing that companies can survive only by heeding "the pure sound of the human voice." "The Visionary's Handbook" counsels, "Your reality is yours alone," and offers such koans as "Whatever we expect to be in the future, we must anticipate we won't be" and "At the speed of light, nothing happens." The New Economy visionaries want us to see that the world is utterly different now. Bits—digitized information—have replaced atoms. Brains have replaced brawn. Established companies are at perpetual risk of being blown apart. Chaos and complexity have replaced order. And Zarathustra beholds the dawn.

Only, if companies are so close to being exploded, why is the stock market so sure that Cisco and Intel are going to be around for a long time? And what about those old-line firms like G.E. and Toyota—have they just been really, really lucky? If the only asset a company has is "human imagination," why doesn't Microsoft want to give away the source code for Windows? Even the truism that we live in an age of bits, not of atoms, has to run up against the fact that General Motors and Wal-Mart sold three hundred and fifty billion dollars' worth of goods last year, almost all of them made of atoms. Besides, most of the companies in the bits business make money by helping companies in the atoms business.



The New Economy isn't a myth. The massive increase in computing power since the seventies, the end of the Cold War, the rise of the Internet, and globalization—all these things have had far-reaching effects, which you can see everywhere, from the sharp increase in American productivity to the profit margins of companies like Oracle and EMC. The New Economy has put a premium on the value of networks, and there are genuine differences between the economics of software and the economics of hardware. But the laws of economics have not been overturned, nor have all the rules of business. And Michael Dell and Andy Grove are a lot more like Henry Ford than like George Clinton.

So why has the New Age section of our bookstores merged with—acquired?—the business section? Probably because plenty of books have already managed to explain these radical changes while remaining sane. The only way to get visionary cred is to up the ante. So the new-wave manifestos coin words like "humanagement" and "provices and serducts," alongside their gnomic formulations ("The certain becomes uncertain, and the unlikely becomes likely"; is there a computer program that generates these things?). And, since it's now a commonplace that companies ought to be nimble, market-driven, and collaborative, the New Economy visionaries have set their sights higher. "We don't care about business," the "Cluetrain" authors say; what we're doing now, according to "Funky Business," is nothing less than "deregulating life."

Ninety years ago, this country was seized by a similar craze, inspired by Frederick W. Taylor's doctrine of scientific management. Taylor and his disciples revolutionized business, increasing productivity, wages, and profits by rationalizing factory work with "time-and-motion" studies. Their success, in turn, inspired an efficiency craze across the United States. Agriculture, schools, churches, homes, government—almost every area of life became a candidate for Taylorization. Progressives like Walter Lippmann argued that scientific management would help replace "drift" with "mastery." In 1914, sixty-nine thousand people attended an efficiency exposition in New York City. *Ladies' Home Journal* ran a series on Taylorism in the household. The efficiency expert Frank Gilbreth (immortalized in "Cheaper by the Dozen") offered "The One Best Way to Do Work." Soon, visionaries were telling us that Taylorist engineers held "the material welfare of all the advanced industrial peoples" in their hands.

Still, there was a logic to writing Taylorist manifestos, since successful planning required lots of engineers who had the right ideas about doing it. There is no logic to this new breed of books, since the point of something like "Funky Business" is that nothing you know today is likely to be of much use tomorrow. "There are no rules, there are no laws, nothing is given," the Swedes write. Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your minds.

—*James Surowiecki*

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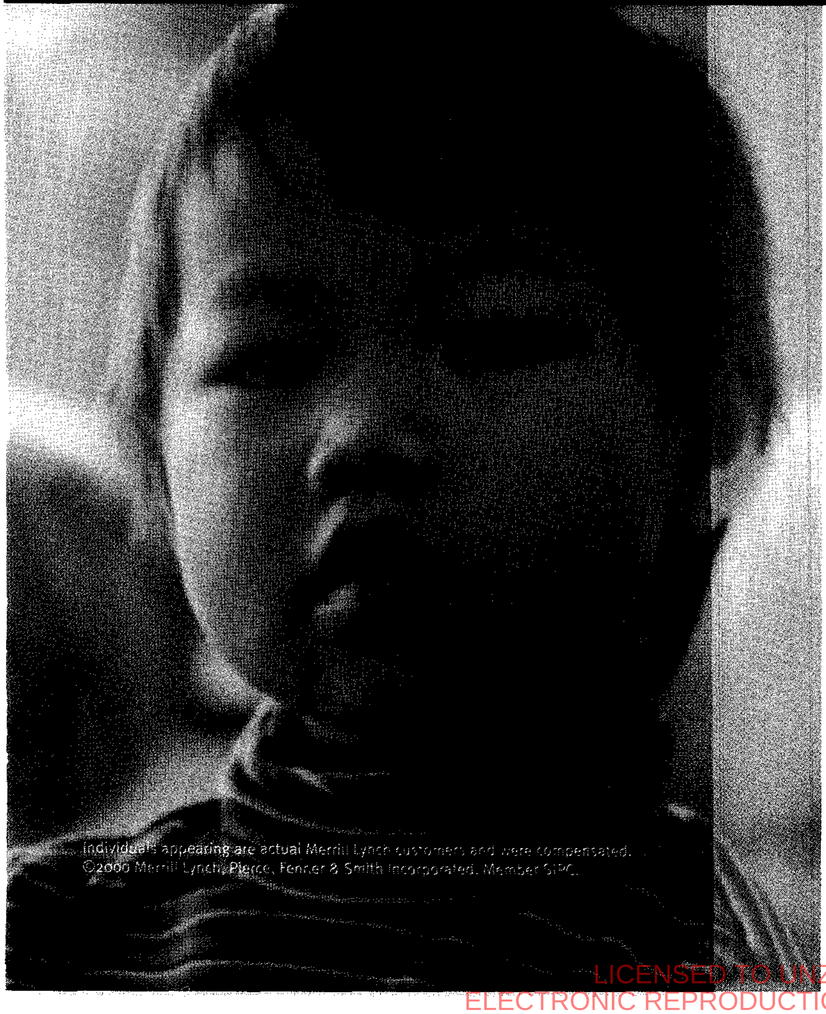

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ANNALS OF MEDICINE

THE PROSTATE PARADOX

There are new techniques for fighting the cancer. But when should we use them?

BY JEROME GROOPMAN

On a recent spring morning, I spent several hours with Dr. Robert Eyre, a senior urological surgeon at my hospital, in Boston, watching him perform biopsies on men who might have prostate cancer. One patient was a forty-three-year-old office worker, whom I'll call Mr. O'Donnell. A recent physical examination had been entirely normal, but a routine test revealed that the level of the prostate-specific antigen, or P.S.A., in his blood was slightly elevated, which can be an early indication of prostate cancer. An internist had referred him to Dr. Eyre for a biopsy.

First, an ultrasound technician asked Mr. O'Donnell to lie on the examining table on his left side, facing the wall, with his knees flexed to his chest. To the technician's left, there was an ultrasonic probe, which was attached to a screen the size of a portable television. The probe had been covered with a condom and coated with lubricant. "You will feel pressure with the probe," the technician said. "That should be the worst of it." Then he slowly inserted the instrument into Mr. O'Donnell's rectum.

On the screen, a black-and-white picture suddenly became visible. At the top of the image, a large black triangular area indicated Mr. O'Donnell's bladder. Beneath it, one could trace the urethra, which carries urine from the bladder out through the penis. The prostate gland, through which the urethra travels, appeared on the screen as a pale-gray blob. Dr. Eyre studied the image carefully for irregularities, but none were seen. The probe was withdrawn, and Dr. Eyre palpated the gland with his gloved index finger.

"You're young, and the gland is large for your age, so your high P.S.A. may simply be due to a large gland," Dr. Eyre told Mr. O'Donnell. "While your prostate is over all a bit firm, there are no discrete suspicious areas, so I am going to perform random biopsies—four on each side of the gland. It shouldn't take too long." The probe was reinserted into Mr. O'Donnell's rectum while Dr. Eyre picked up a cylindrical, spring-loaded gun and attached a long needle to the top. The gun can deliver a great deal of pressure virtually instantaneously. The bore of the biopsy needle is very small—eighteen-gauge—and it retrieves a sample of tissue roughly the thickness of fishing line and a little more than half an inch in length.

Despite an array of high-tech treatments, there's little agreement on what works best.

"You'll feel pressure and hear a pop," Dr. Eyre said. "Try not to jump." Mr. O'Donnell drew his knees closer to his chest as Dr. Eyre slid the biopsy gun into the patient, inside the rectal probe. The sharp pop followed, and a white line flashed across the screen as the needle penetrated deep into the prostate gland and retracted. The doctor then removed the biopsy gun as the technician held open a small vial of formaldehyde, into which a pale-white filigree of tissue was deposited.

The entire procedure took less than

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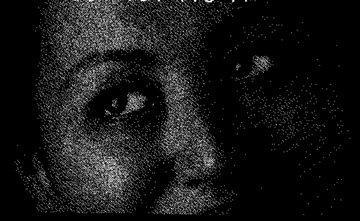

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ten minutes. When Dr. Eyre and I returned to his office, he told me that he was concerned. "Even though Mr. O'Donnell's P.S.A. level is appropriate for the size of his gland," he said, "this is the art of a very educated finger."

The prostate gland is roughly the size and shape of a walnut, and encased in a fibrous sheath called the capsule. We know that it produces proteins that are in seminal fluid, but its function is not fully understood. The nerves and blood vessels to the penis which control erectile function run along the gland's right and left edges.

The cells of the gland depend upon androgens for growth; these hormones also promote the growth of cancer. Most prostate cancers develop along the outer borders of the gland, away from the urinary stream, where they usually grow without causing symptoms. In general, the progress of the disease is extremely slow, possibly spanning decades; the majority of diagnosed cancers are confined to the gland, and are thus potentially curable. On the other hand, the prostate's location—beneath the bladder, around the urethra, and in front of the rectum—makes its treatment and removal particularly tricky.

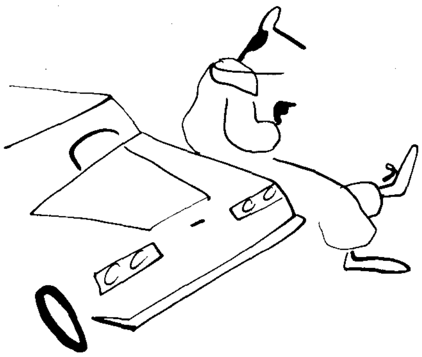
If the cancer metastasizes, it usually begins by spreading locally, into the fat that surrounds the prostate. Over time, cancer cells can enter the lymph nodes in the pelvis and the bloodstream, most commonly landing in the bones and the spinal cord; advanced stages of the cancer are often marked by severe bone pain and paralysis, as the spinal nerves are strangled. Prostate cancer that has spread beyond the fat surrounding the gland is rarely curable.

Mr. O'Donnell had a fair chance of receiving bad news from his biopsy, even though he is a relatively young man: prostate cancer is the most common non-skin cancer among American men. With the advent of widespread P.S.A. testing, in the late nineteen-eighties, many more cases of prostate cancer are diagnosed yearly; at present, more than a million American men are diagnosed with prostate cancer. A family history of the disease increases your risk. If your father or your brother had prostate cancer, your risk increases twofold; if both had it, your risk is quintupled. An estimated thirty-seven thousand men died of it last year; only lung cancer causes more fatalities among men.

Many men who have not been diagnosed carry nests of "occult" cancer cells in the prostate, which are so slow-growing that they may never cause problems. Autopsy studies show that more than thirty per cent of men carry occult prostate cancer by the age of fifty; by the age of eighty, nearly fifty per cent of men have some form of prostate cancer.

If Mr. O'Donnell learns that he has prostate cancer and educates himself about his condition, he will make another disconcerting discovery: there is a frustrating lack of consensus among medical professionals on how best to treat the disease. The advice that patients receive is frequently determined by the kind of specialist they consult. In cases where the cancer is confined to the prostate, urologists generally favor surgery to excise the cancer, whereas radiation oncologists may suggest external radiation treatment, or the implantation of radioactive seeds within the prostate. (A few specialists recommend freezing the gland in a treatment called cryotherapy.) One school of thought suggests that prostate cancer is a disease most men die *with*, rather than *from*—that only a small fraction of men will have a form of prostate cancer that affects the quality or duration of their lives. This consideration might support "watchful waiting," or observation without treatment, since surgery or radiation often causes impotence, incontinence, or both.

But in which cases is watchful waiting a reasonable response? The odds haven't been properly calculated. Unlike breast-cancer research, in which we have several decades of relatively sound data about the risks and results of various treatments, prostate-cancer research has not been conducted in a sufficiently standardized fashion. There have been no studies in which large comparable groups of patients have been randomly assigned to surgery, radiation, or observation and then followed for a significant period of time. Virtually all the published studies have been retrospective, and have been criticized as biased and methodologically flawed. To promote one therapy over another, some doctors claim success rates that are based on small numbers of favorable outcomes, and cite statistics on potency and continence that are misleading.



As a medical oncologist, I treat patients with metastatic prostate cancer. But recently I set out to learn more about how different specialists respond when a biopsy like Mr. O'Donnell's turns out to be positive, and I interviewed several experts at the forefront of their fields. One was Dr. Peter Scardino, the chairman of the Department of Urology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, in Manhattan. Dr. Scardino is a firm believer in radical prostatectomy. He has published more than a hundred and seventy scholarly articles on the diagnosis and therapy of prostate cancer, and has performed nearly two thousand prostatectomies.

We spoke in the lounge adjoining the O.R., before we scrubbed for his midday case. Dr. Scardino is in his early fifties, with a full head of black hair, and he speaks with the gentlemanly graciousness of his native Savannah. "We'd all like to understand the biology of prostate cancer, so that we could individualize the treatment and make it fit each man," he said. "But this disease is so variable that we need to understand the science better before we can make definitive recommendations. And we have to refine our techniques of both surgery and radiation to such a degree that we limit complications of erectile dysfunction, bowel difficulties, and incontinence. Then, for the patient, it can become a matter of taste: Do you prefer Italian or Chinese?"

Dr. Scardino readily acknowledged that the field suffers from "turf" battles. For many years, surgeons were reluctant to consider other forms of therapy, and, without reliable data, it is difficult to persuade other specialists to change their favored forms of treatment. But Dr. Scardino also pointed out that the biases of doctors are only part of the picture; the cultural and psychological biases of the patients also play a role.

"I recommend to some of the patients referred to me that we just follow their cases closely and not intervene with surgery or radiation," he said. "But it is hard for men to defer therapy. Maybe one in ten agrees to be followed closely. It is part of the American culture—the way medicine is practiced and the expectations that people have. Some doctors are also concerned about liability. If you follow someone closely and the cancer spreads under your watch, will you be sued?"

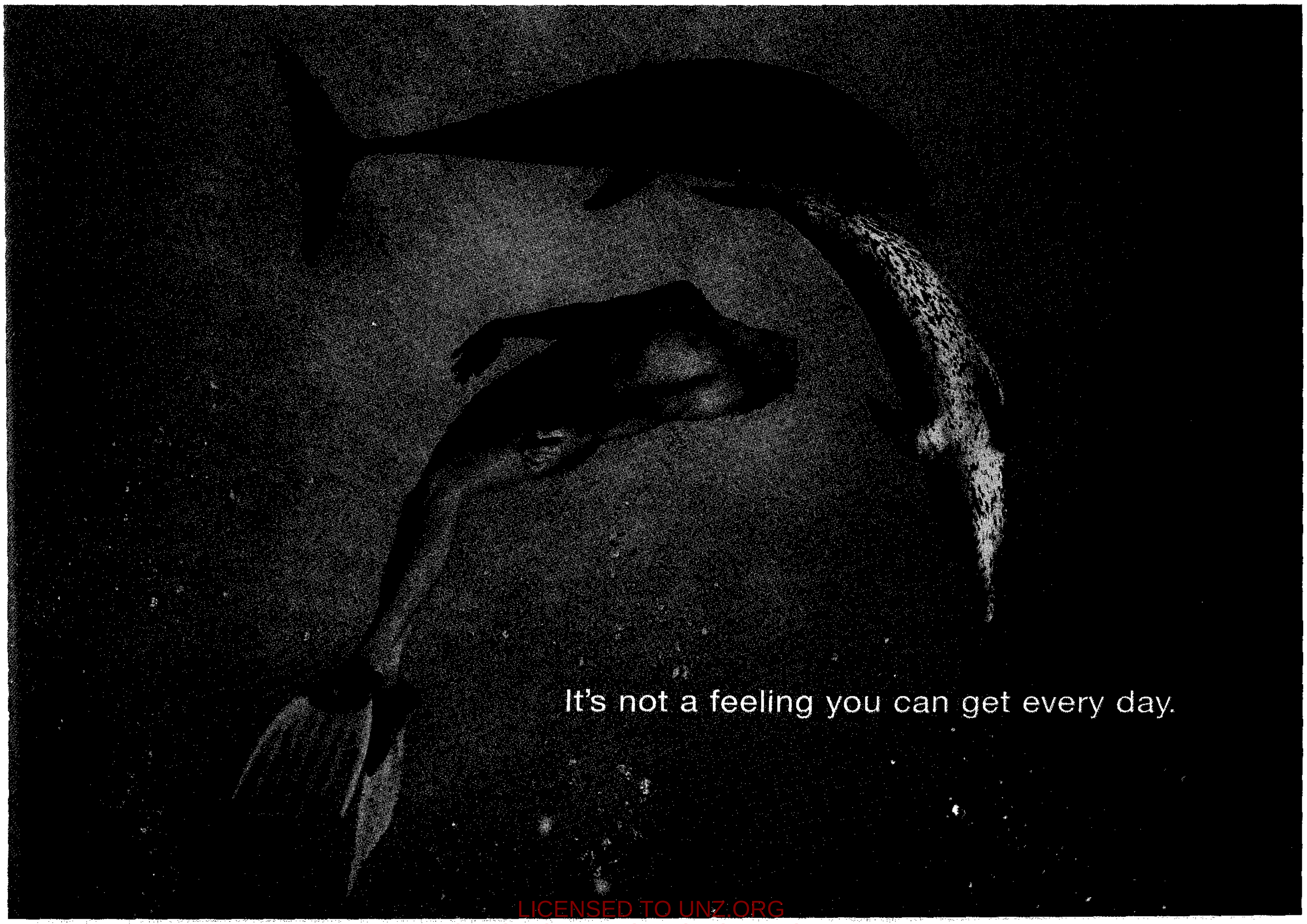
Dr. Scardino said that at a medical meeting he attended in Great Britain several years ago the conference chairman had asked which doctors in the audience performed P.S.A. testing routinely. "The Americans raised their hands—the National Health Service in Britain does not endorse P.S.A. screening," Dr. Scardino said. "Then the chairman asked the doctors whether they were treating large numbers of their patients with careful monitoring rather than with active intervention. Now the Brits raised their hands."

We entered the O.R. and met the patient, whom I'll call Mr. Drake. He was fifty-one years old and, like Mr. O'Donnell, had no clinical symptoms and an elevated P.S.A. on a routine physical examination. But Mr. Drake's biopsy had showed cancer with a high Gleason score. (The Gleason score is a calculation that indicates the cancer's level of aggressiveness; the higher the score, the greater the danger that the cancer will spread beyond the prostate.) Dr. Scardino also showed me a nomogram, a graph that predicts the probability of the cancer's returning five years after the operation. We calculated the probability for Mr. Drake at about thirty per cent.

Mr. Drake lay on the operating table, his arms extended in a cruciform posture. Dr. Scardino placed his hand reassuringly on the patient's arm. As the anesthesiologist began to administer the sedative, Mr. Drake said to Dr. Scardino, "Try your best to preserve my nerves."

An incision was made, beginning about an inch below the navel and ending about an inch above the base of the penis. Dr. Scardino operates with a headlight, like a spelunker, and magnifying lenses that resemble jeweller's loupes. "This operation is not forgiving," he said to me. "The margin of error in damaging the nerves to the penis or the sphincters that control the bladder is usually one to two millimetres. Magnifying loupes are used in neurosurgery, and I use them because I want that kind of precision."

In Mr. Drake's case, the area of the prostate thought to be cancerous was at its outer border, right next to the nerve tracts, so the procedure would clearly be a challenge. "You must get clean margins," Dr. Scardino said. "But there is a wide variation among surgeons about what we call margins and whether we dissect out every bit of the gland." Dr.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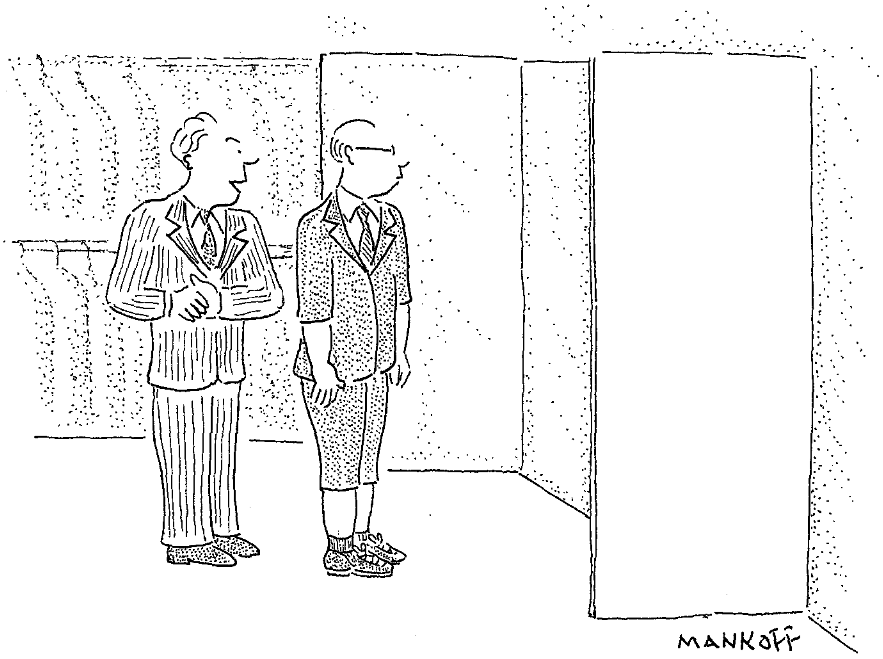

"Capri pants, capri jacket—the ideal summer suit."

• •

Scardino is well aware that removing less tissue may cause less damage to the nerves; this means not only a greater likelihood that the patient will retain his potency but a better track record in this area for the surgeon, as well. Still, he considers the risk of leaving cancer behind an unacceptable one.

A plastic surgeon was on call to do a nerve graft from the patient's foot should Dr. Scardino be forced to remove the nerve bundle. "A lot of people think that nerve grafts have not been proved to sustain erectile function," Dr. Scardino said. "They were done years ago, but they were done by urologists, not plastic surgeons, and they didn't work very well. I just submitted a paper on cases where nerve grafts were used in twelve men in whom both left and right nerves had to be cut to remove the cancer. Four of the twelve had return of reasonable erectile functioning, meaning that they achieved erections sufficient for vaginal penetration in about half the attempts."

Dr. Scardino focussed intently as he cut deep into the pelvis, searching first for the lymph nodes that surround the prostate gland. I tried to identify the anatomical structures—it was like looking into a shadowed well of blood and bowel and nerves and arteries and muscle. "We are there," Dr. Scardino said to me when he had cut down to the thick grayish-white sheath of the prostate capsule. It resembled a clamshell. He felt the surface of the gland. "It's firm on the right side. We'll have to do a wider dissection to get it all. But maybe we'll be lucky and won't have to take the nerves with it."

As the likelihood increased that a nerve graft would be needed, the plastic surgeon was paged. "I'm encouraged by our pilot study," Dr. Scardino said, "but what we need is a formal randomized prospective study of urologists working with plastic surgeons to prove that grafts are truly valuable in sustaining potency."

A few moments later, Dr. Scardino showed me what looked like a mass of yellow strands that were the thickness of a silk thread: "That's probably the nerve bundle." Most of the strands ran alongside the prostate gland into the penis, but projections of nerves also splayed over the capsule of the gland.

A nurse stood by a new machine called a CaverMap, which looks like a VCR console with a digital display on the front. This device would help confirm the location of the nerve bundle and assess erectile function before and after the prostate gland was removed. A thin plastic tube filled with mercury was fit around the base of Mr. Drake's penis, and attached to a strain gauge. Dr. Scardino took an instrument the size of an electric toothbrush with an electrode at its end. After determining the baseline pressure, he applied the electrode to the bundle of nerves he believed ran to the penis. I watched as the penis jumped slightly and then slowly reddened and engorged. Blue arrows on the CaverMap console raced upward. "That's the nerve bundle, all right," Dr. Scardino said.

Over the next forty minutes, Dr. Scardino performed a series of cuts circumscribing the prostate gland. "We are going to have to take some nerves on the right side," he said. I watched as the fine yellow fibres were sliced away. Finally, the doctor lifted the gland out of the patient and placed it gingerly on a green towel; a bright lamp was focussed on it by an assisting nurse. Dr. Scardino examined its surface, showing me again the nerves that had been sacrificed. "Let's check to see whether what we left works."

He positioned the electrode over the remaining bundle of fibres. A dull whine that sounded like a faulty smoke detector emanated from the machine. "Zero," the CaverMap nurse said. "No sign of movement." Dr. Scardino moved the electrode further into the pelvis, following the course of the nerves until he had almost reached the place where they were lost in the muscle and entered the penile shaft. Again, there was a whine from the CaverMap, indicating no change in the pulses from the strain gauge. Again, there was no sign of movement.

"Let's let his blood pressure rise," Dr. Scardino said to the anesthesiologist. "Bring it up above a hundred and keep it there." Then he turned to a resident who was assisting him. "Loosen the clamps on those arteries." (An erection requires blood flow, and the patient had already lost about a litre of blood during the operation.) The monitor near the anesthesiologist showed a gradual return of Mr. Drake's blood pressure, and Dr. Scardino placed the electrode over the nerve bundle on the right side of Mr. Drake's pelvis. The CaverMap began its dull whine. Then the noise was interrupted by a series of sharp clicks. "Plus one," the nurse announced. Seconds passed. "Plus two." At twenty seconds, the strain gauge had fallen back to plus one. Luminescent blue arrows raced up the display on the CaverMap. The penis swelled to about half its prior breadth. "He is anatomically intact," Dr. Scardino said. "It was fortunate that his nerves were just far enough away from the capsule. There is no need for a nerve graft."

Dr. Scardino was pleased, but also cautious. "You get your final report card quickly from the pathologist," he reminded me, meaning that in the next three days he would learn whether the margins that he had carved were indeed free of cancer cells. "I'll learn whether we made the right judgments."

Mr. Drake would have a catheter in his bladder over the next week to ten days. "After we take it out, we'll see if he is dry," Dr. Scardino said, referring to the frequent complication of temporary urinary incontinence. Dr. Scardino does extensive followup interviewing with his patients after surgery; after a year, the majority of them have fully regained continence. Mr. Drake would be given a prescription for Viagra. If after six weeks he was not having satisfactory spontaneous erections, he would be advised to begin injections of drugs into his penis, which may hasten the return of erectile function.

Shortly after the surgery, Dr. Scardino met with Mrs. Drake. "Things went well," Dr. Scardino said, reaching for her hand. "We saved about eighty per cent of the nerve on the right. He has an aggressive cancer, and I don't know yet if this cured him. But we are hopeful."

For many years, radiation treatment of prostate cancer has been explored as an alternative to surgery. By and large, older men who had serious underlying illnesses, like heart disease or emphysema, were judged to be risky surgical candidates, and thus were referred by urologists to radiation oncologists. So were patients with large, bulky tumors that were judged impossible to remove. But the complications from the therapy were significant, including radiation injuries to the rectum, bladder, and urethra which caused rectal bleeding and bladder irritation. Erectile dysfunction often appeared months later, after the shrinking and scarring of small blood vessels in and around the nerves of the penis. Although there were few strictly reliable studies comparing prostatectomy and radiation treatment, the informal consensus was that the latter was inferior. (Of course, the patients being referred in the first place were those who were medically frail or had a poor prognosis.) Now, however, advances in technology may make radiation a comparable option to surgery for many more patients.

After watching Dr. Scardino operate, I went to meet Dr. Steven Leibel, who is the chairman of radiation oncology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Dr. Leibel has graying hair, horn-rimmed glasses, and a warm laugh. He and his group are developing a form of treatment called "intensity-modulated radiation therapy." It uses high-performance computers and computer-driven radiation machines that can safely deliver intense levels of radiation to the prostate, sculpting the beam to fit the precise anatomy of the gland and largely sparing the rectum and bladder. As in Dr. Scar-

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dino's surgery, a miscalculation of a few millimetres can be catastrophic. Before the new technology was developed, Dr. Leibel explained, the dose that could be delivered had been severely limited because of the potentially serious side effects. "Now we give a wish list to the computer regarding the tolerance of the rectum and the bladder and the dose we want to aim at the prostate," he said. Patients' anatomies differ, and each person's anatomy can be reconstructed in three dimensions using a CT scanner. Special radiation machines have been designed with between twenty-six and sixty pairs of tungsten leaves; these leaves move during the therapy, absorbing different levels of radiation and shaping the beam as it is projected to the tissue.

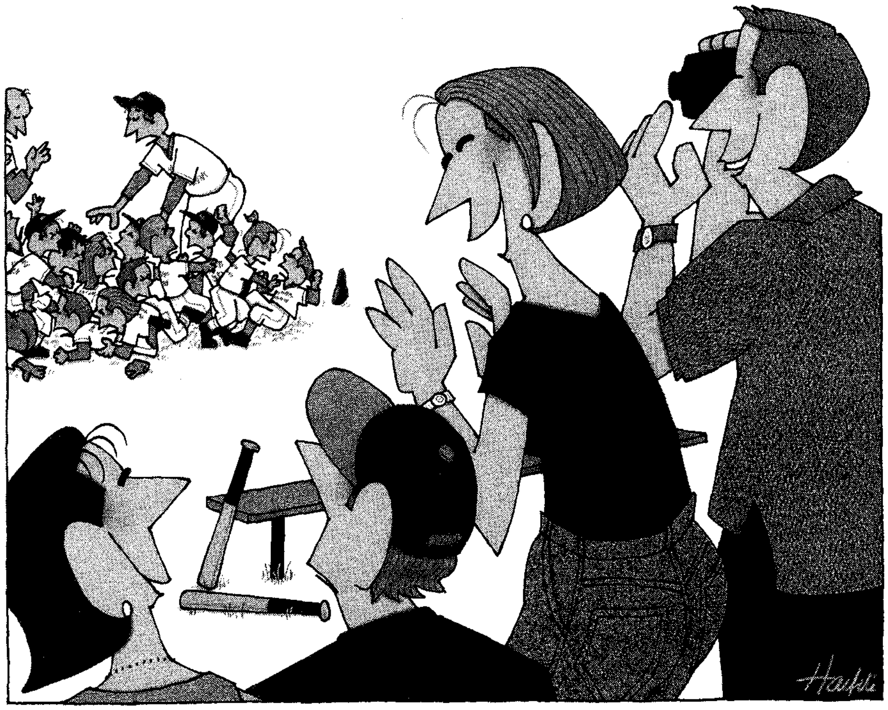
We took the elevator down to the first floor and sat with a group of radiation physicists who were typing commands into computers for different patients that day. Dr. Leibel called up one patient on a screen that was split into two parts. One section of the screen projected a two-dimensional image of the patient's pelvis; the second presented what is called a "wire-frame projection," a three-dimensional representation of the bladder, the prostate, and the rectum which is constructed from multiple CT scans.

Wire-frame projections resemble slinky toys, and the computer can rotate them, so that you can look at them from the top, or from the bottom, or from the side. Different shades representing different doses of radiation can be added to the image; Dr. Leibel typed in a series of commands, and the computer projected a palette of white, red, and blue over the 3-D projection of bladder, prostate, and rectum.

"How do you know that this software actually works?" I asked.

Dr. Leibel explained that the system was initially constructed using customized synthetic parts built from a material whose density corresponded exactly to that of the tissues of the pelvis. Dosimeters were placed in the parts. Only after his group felt confident that the computer was calculating the correct doses in a precise fashion was the system used on patients.

We left the simulation room and moved to the treatment area. Two technicians were operating a bank of computers. Patients in bathrobes and green hospital slippers were moving in and out of different rooms. "Patients spend fifteen minutes on a machine," Dr. Leibel said. "First, they must get into a special plastic cast, which has been molded to their anatomy, and which fixes them on the table to receive the beam from the X-ray machine. Then they are radiated for four and a half minutes."



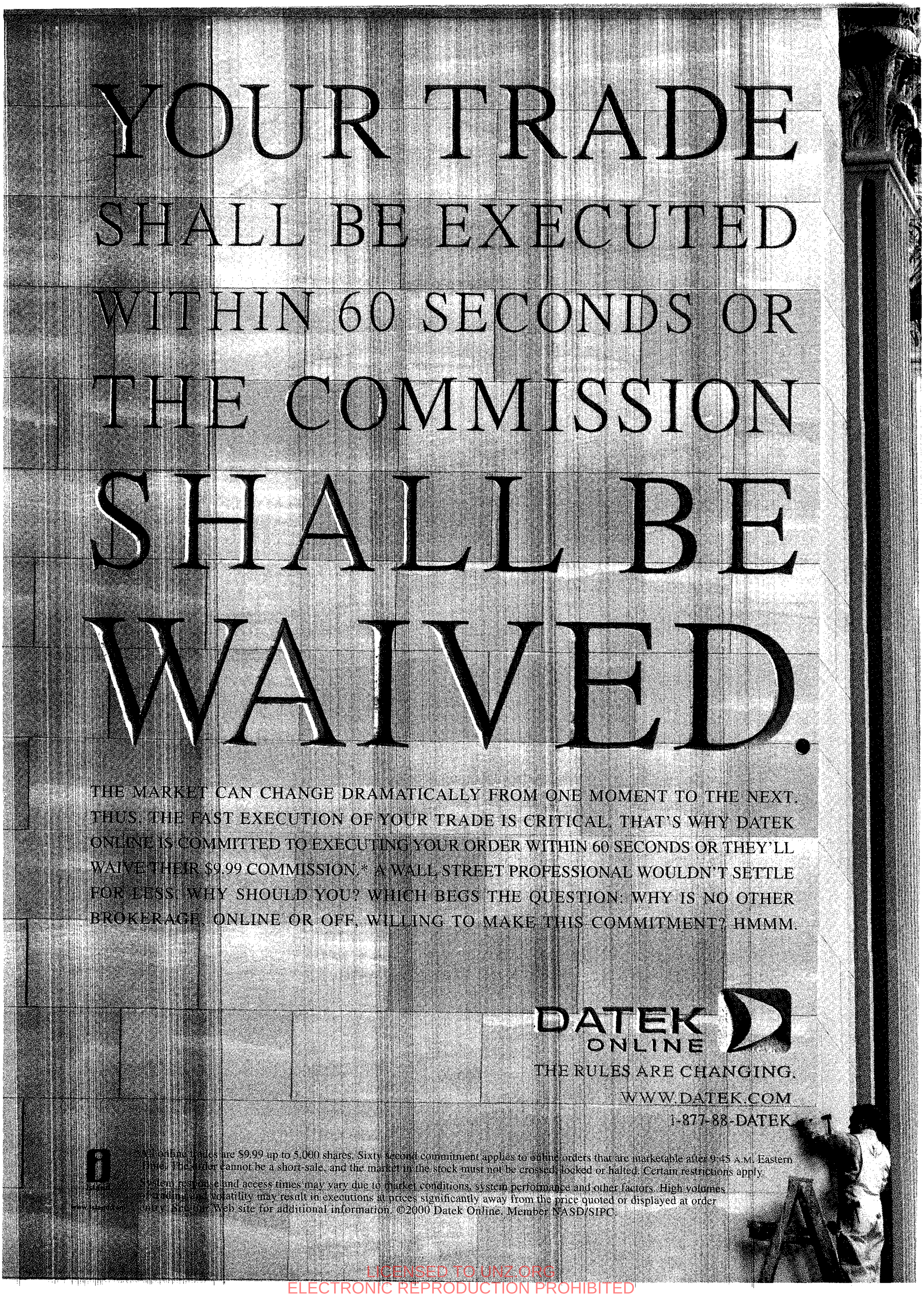
"It's her first bench-clearing brawl."

I watched as a technician flipped a switch and a massive lead door some ten inches thick slowly drifted shut; then she activated the X-ray machine. As the beam was projected, a series of blue rectangles appeared on the computer screen, each one representing a tungsten leaf used to manipulate the beam; the leaves slid back and forth, modulating the radiation in a precise correspondence to the dimensions of the patient's prostate gland.

The technology has allowed escalation of the standard radiation dose to 81 Gy from the conventional limit of between 65 and 70. Moreover, the incidence of rectal bleeding has fallen from fifteen per cent to three per cent. Initial data from some two hundred and twenty patients, based on prostate biopsies two and a half years after treatment, show that as the radiation dose is increased a larger proportion of men have no residual cancer. The difference can range from fifty-one per cent being free of cancer cells at standard radiation doses to ninety-one per cent at the higher 81 Gy dose. But at least a decade must elapse before the figures are truly meaningful.

"Prospective trials are essential," Dr. Leibel concluded. "Our goal is to compare the 3-D computer-assisted radiation to standard radiation and to surgery. We'll also use new biological and molecular imaging technologies to try to show us where the cancer cells are hiding in the gland. That way, we can focus the most intense radiation on those areas."

This form of treatment generally requires daily sessions that span some nine weeks. Other radiation oncologists are refining a onetime procedure called brachytherapy, which involves the implantation of radioactive seeds in the prostate. I visited Dr. Anthony D'Amico, who is the chief of genito-urinary radiation oncology at the Brigham and Women's Hospital and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, in Boston. We met two stories below the ground level of the hospital, in the brachytherapy suite. A wiry thirty-eight-year-old, Dr. D'Amico earned a Ph.D. in physics from M.I.T. before he got his M.D. He is optimistic about the possibilities of brachytherapy, but he is also aware of the lack of data to justify its widespread application, and so he selects his patients carefully: they all



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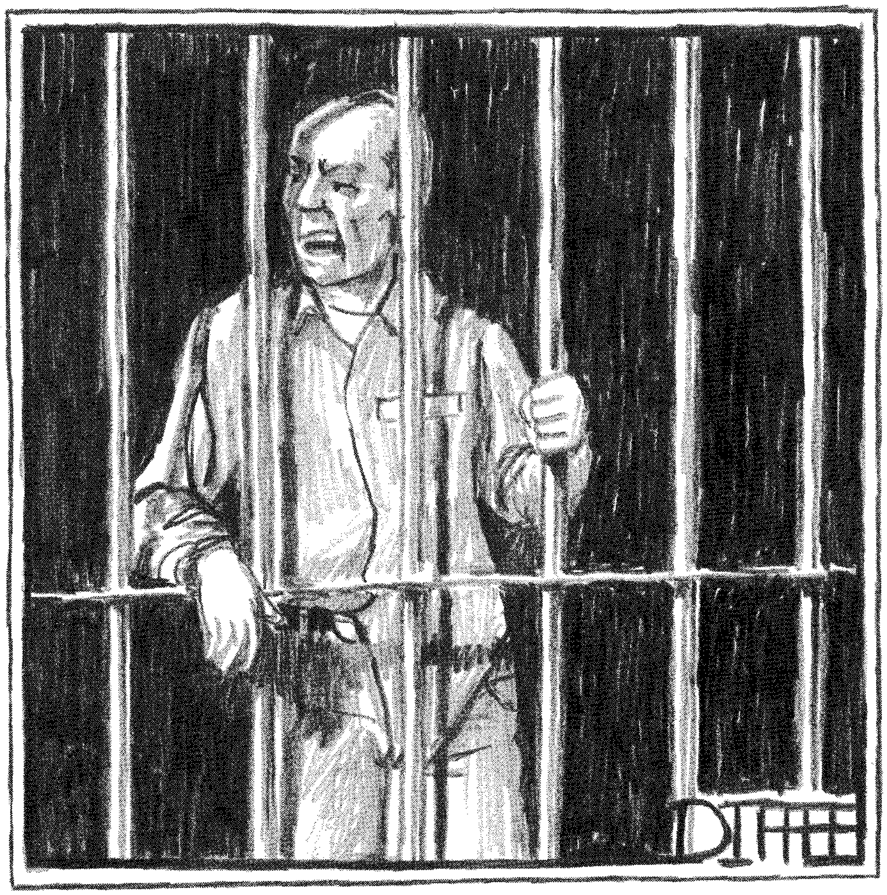

"Would it be too much to ask to get a DSL in here?"

have very early-stage, unaggressive cancers confined to the gland. That morning, a sixty-three-year-old man whom I will call Mr. Keller was being treated with a refined technique of seed implantation. "Everyone who comes here under the age of seventy is first offered a radical prostatectomy as the gold standard," Dr. D'Amico said, "but this patient was fearful about incontinence and chose a non-surgical approach."

Dr. D'Amico was working with a team of medical experts that included an M.R.I. specialist, radiation physicists, and a urological surgeon. In an anteroom, he showed me Mr. Keller's earlier M.R.I. scan on a computer screen. Fine shades of gray formed the familiar walnut shape. Commands were typed on the computer keyboard. Red dots appeared on the M.R.I. image. These indicated where nests of cancer cells were situated in the gland, and where the radioactivity was to be seeded. The computer then superimposed green dots, simulating the trajectories of the needles that would deliver the radioactive seeds.

We entered a cool, cavernous concrete room, where Mr. Keller was lying in a special M.R.I. machine. On each side of him were six-foot magnets, which looked like giant metal doughnuts. He was under general anesthesia, his legs raised and held in stirrups, like a woman undergoing a gynecological examination. A firm coil, called an obturator, had been inserted into his rectum to exert constant outward pressure and prevent motion of the prostate during the procedure.

Behind leaded glass, a radiation specialist was loading titanium-encased Iodine-125 pellets into a needle. Each pellet is two and a half millimetres in length. The dose of radiation to be delivered had also been customized to Mr. Keller's gland by the computer. A plastic template was fixed to the skin between his scrotum and his rectum. Dr. D'Amico's assistant then took the needle and inserted it, through a hole in the plastic template, into Mr. Keller's prostate. As the assistant threaded another long needle loaded with radioactive seeds through the plastic template, Dr. D'Amico told me, "We are currently designing a robotic arm to make the needle insertion even more precise."

During the procedure, the M.R.I. specialist watched the computer screen, where images of the prostate were being generated every three seconds. "We need to move the needle three millimetres to the patient's right," the M.R.I. specialist said. The computer screen with the M.R.I. image showed the line of the needle just missing a virtual marker, a white "T." Dr. D'Amico's assistant repositioned the needle until it corresponded with the target. After forty minutes and twenty-four needles, Mr. Keller had ninety titanium pellets filled with radioactive iodine permanently embedded in his prostate.

"This is all a matter of trying to improve techniques so that patients can be cured and enjoy a better quality of life," Dr. D'Amico explained. Each week, two or three of his patients undergo brachytherapy. A hundred and thirty-eight patients have been treated to date; seventy-four patients have been followed for a year, and fifteen patients for two years. About five per cent have short-term problems with "urinary urgency," but this passes. There has been minimal inflammation of the rectum from the radiation.

As with radical prostatectomy, however, the patient is likely to have difficulties achieving an erection, although these difficulties may take longer to appear. "Our potency outcomes are competitive with nerve-sparing surgery for a young man who is fully potent before the procedure," Dr. D'Amico said. "Again, I emphasize, these are highly selected patients, but, at two and a half years, our small series shows that about twenty-five per cent have significant problems with erections." In his study, there have been no cases of recurrent prostate cancer after the seed radiation, to judge from the patients' P.S.A. levels. But, like Scardino's nerve-graft study, the sample size is still so small as to be almost statistically insignificant, and, like Leibel's studies, much longer follow-ups are needed before conclusions can be drawn.

"The next advance in prostate-cancer diagnosis will be using optics," Dr.

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D'Amico predicted. He is collaborating with physicists and electrical engineers at M.I.T. on using a fibre-optic scope inserted into the prostate to produce a beam of near-infrared wavelengths. The image that results has a resolution of ten microns, about the size of a cell, to a depth of three millimetres. In the future, Dr. D'Amico believes, the interior of the prostate gland will be visualized this way, and the cancer assessed without the need for biopsy. This would allow a doctor to select a treatment based on a complete knowledge of where his patient's cancer lies and how aggressive it appears.

Despite the serious side effects that can accompany surgery and radiation therapies, most of the doctors I spoke to generally believed in early, aggressive intervention: prostate cancer that does spread is a debilitating, excruciating, and essentially incurable disease. Once the cancer has metastasized, surgery and brachytherapy are no longer treatment options, and the patient must undergo hormone therapy for the rest of his life. Years ago, I cared for a sixty-eight-year-old man, whom I'll call Peter Manuel, suffering from advanced prostate cancer. Three years before he came to see me, Mr. Manuel had developed symptoms of an enlarged prostate. This was ascribed to his age, and a local urologist performed a trans-urethral prostatectomy, shaving away the enlarged parts of the gland which obstructed the outflow of urine through the urethra. Within the shavings were areas of cancer. The cells had a large and distorted shape, aggressive in appearance. Mr. Manuel underwent a second operation, in which the urologist excised several lymph nodes that rested against the back of the pelvis. Deposits of prostate cancer were found within these nodes. The urologist treated Mr. Manuel with a combination of hormone blockers to retard the progress of the disease, but within a year the prostate cancer had spread to his lower spine.

By the time he was referred to me, Mr. Manuel looked like many other aging men with bone metastases from prostate cancer. A short, neatly dressed gentleman, he offered a ready smile, but his eyes seemed heavy and vacant. He was taking large doses of Percodan for the back pain, and I noticed how slow his steps were, and how long it took for him to find a comfortable position lying down. A physical exam showed the effects of his hormonal therapy. His testes were atrophied, the size of two marbles, and there was modest enlargement of his breasts; hormone therapy nearly always leaves the patient impotent. When I pressed firmly on his lower spine, he winced in pain. The cancer in his bones was leaching out calcium, which was now elevated in his blood system. High levels of calcium cause mental dullness, thirst, kidney stones, and disturbed heart rhythm.

After the exam, I explained to Mr. Manuel and his wife that at this stage of the disease we were unable to cure the cancer; we could only attempt to control its growth and minimize the pain it caused. For some four months, the pain was lessened as X-ray therapy burned away the cancer. Several weeks later, however, Mr. Manuel had a gnawing pain in his lower back. An M.R.I. scan showed that the cancer had quickly regrown and was now pressing on the spinal nerves. A neurosurgeon excised some of the cancer from the surrounding nerves, to prevent paralysis.

Three months later, symptoms returned. Mr. Manuel wanted to be treated, as he put it, until there was no hope left. Tumor masses now studded his abdomen and bones, and chemotherapy did little to help. Soon his blood calcium began to rise, and all the measures we attempted to reduce it were to no avail. He drifted into a coma. His wife agreed that nothing more should be done, and he died.

It is terminal cases like Mr. Manuel's that inform the debates among oncologists about P.S.A. testing and encourage doctors to recommend intervention for early-stage disease like Mr. Drake's. But we must recognize that that perspective, too, is only a partial one. The drawbacks of intervention in early-stage prostate cancer may be less drastic and less visible to the medical community, but they may be extremely significant to the patient. Most prostate-cancer patients do not have access to either the technologies or the highly skilled specialists that I encountered in my research. And there remains the vexed problem of how to balance the consequences of intervening with the consequences of not intervening.

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Dr. James Talcott is a medical oncologist and the director of the Center for Outcomes Research at the Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center, in Boston. He has analyzed different interventions for prostate cancer, weighing issues of quality of life against those of survival. "Assessment of the outcomes of serious diseases like cancer has generally been a process of body counting," he told me. But

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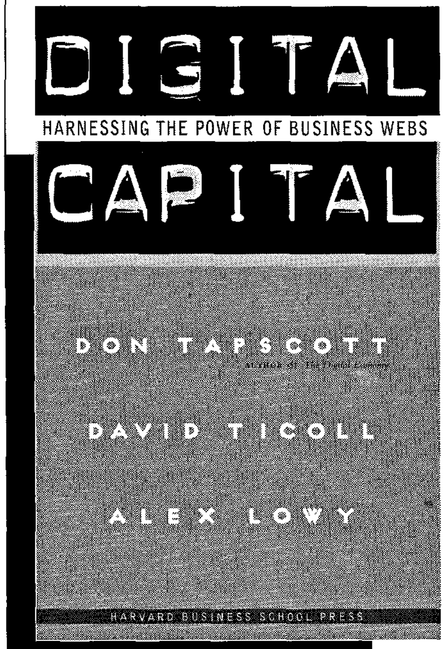
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prostate cancer, he argued, is different.

"Think about it," he continued. "Nearly two hundred thousand men a year are diagnosed with prostate cancer, and annually about thirty-five to forty thousand die. That means that for the vast majority the cancer is not the cause of death. For most, it's like diabetes, chronic and controllable, for one or two decades, and then for the unfortunate minority who die of the disease, during the last six months, it's like lung cancer, with the tumor spreading widely and causing pain and debility."

Does that mean that we need to recast our concept of this particular disease, to start thinking about it differently from the way we think about other common cancers? Given what we know—and don't know—why should we be so eager to treat? The fundamental challenge in recommending what to do after the diagnosis, Dr. Talcott believes, is to "fit prostate cancer in with the life cycle of the man."

Dr. Talcott studies outcomes based on interviews and questionnaires with patients rather than on statistics from surgeons or radiation therapists. "A patient doesn't like to tell a doctor who he thinks saved his life that he is leaking urine or is impotent. It's a magical relationship between patient and doctor—especially among older men, who are reluctant to say things that they fear may be unwelcome by their physician." He and a colleague, Jack Clark, have conducted focus groups among men of different ages and different races to target key issues in assessing quality of life. "Men never give up being sexual people," Dr. Talcott said. "What we learned from the focus groups is that no man ever stops thinking about sex."

Dr. Talcott is also keenly aware that the statistics made available to patients before surgery can be misleading. In a recently published study, conducted among several Harvard hospitals, Dr. Talcott found a high frequency of impotence and incontinence after prostatectomy. This contrasted with some of the studies published over the years by individual surgeons which claimed impotence rates of less than thirty per cent and incontinence rates close to zero. "I explain to patients that these published series select for the nerve-sparing operation the youngest, healthiest men who have the highest level of potency before therapy," Dr. Talcott said. "These are usually not the men in their sixties or seventies sitting in my office."

The important questions are who needs treatment and who needs watching. "More than three-quarters of the patients don't really need to be treated," Dr. Talcott said. "The whole battle about what is the best treatment targets between three and fifteen per cent of all the men diagnosed with prostate cancer. And if we know whom we need to treat we then have to show how significantly that treatment would extend life."

This battle over early treatment has intensified with recent data that show a decline in the rate of death from prostate cancer. Dr. Talcott, for one, is not sure that the decline is the result of early diagnosis through P.S.A. screening. "The only certain impact of P.S.A. screening is that patients are being diagnosed earlier and therefore have the best prognosis, since you enlarge the pool of men with small, early, slow-growing cancers not causing symptoms," he said. It is possible that the improved statistics may be due to other factors entirely—changes in the accuracy of data collection from death certificates, for example, or in the diet of the American male. "Has P.S.A. screening just forced men to make decisions five to ten years earlier than they otherwise would, decisions that change their life with regard to quality?" What's more, Dr. Talcott points out, the information available to help patients make the right choice is insufficient. "Without randomized prospective trials, we do not know that one approach to prostate cancer is better than another," he said. And yet, for the patient facing a more than twenty-per-cent chance of ending his life on hormone therapy and in terrible pain, doing nothing seems equally inadequate.

"I tell my patients to do thought experiments," Dr. Talcott went on. "Try to imagine your life after a radical prostatectomy, where you are impotent. Try to imagine your life after radiation therapy, where you suffer with urinary or bowel irritation. Then imagine that you've done nothing, just been closely monitored. In each scenario—surgery or radiation or just observation—then imagine that the cancer has come back. Which bullets are you willing to take?" ◆

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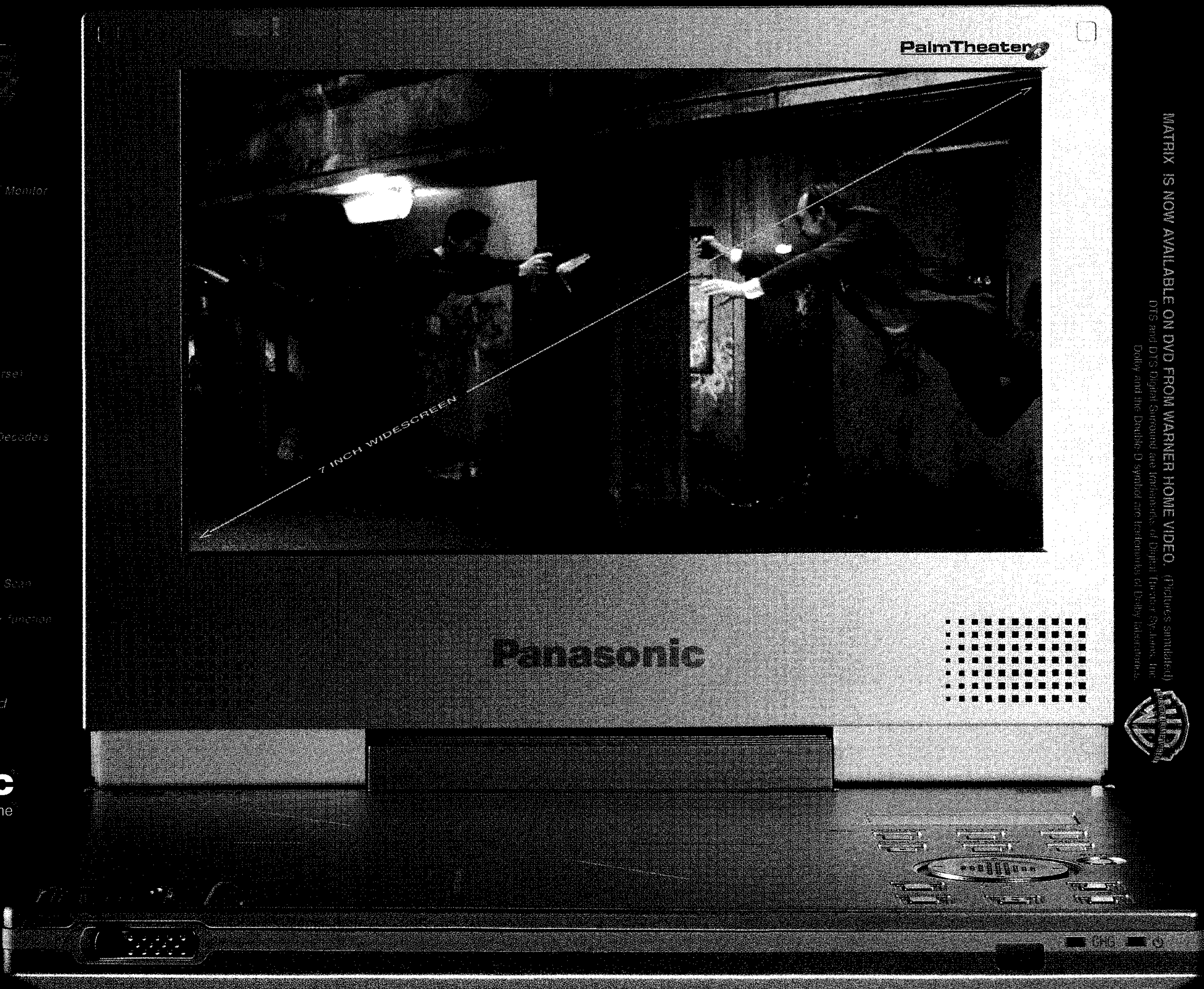

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BEOWULF: NEW PROSE TRANSLATIONS

BY BEN GREENMAN

ISTVAN BANYAI

Beowulf: A New Diary Translation

by Helen Fielding

26 April 899

1,154 lbs. (but post-rampage), alcohol units 3 (only v. small amounts from blood of pissed warriors), cigarettes 0, calories 114,900.

Consumed today:
31 Danish warriors
3 slices fat-free Jarlsberg
1 Danish (pastry, not warrior)

Noon. My lair. Gaah! Was supposed to be out chasing peasants around bog, but dozed off after flossing bits of warrior out of teeth. Received another condemnation from Hrothgar ("Kill the beast! Bring me his head!"). Grrr. What does he expect? Monsters eat warriors. Can't stop wondering why he hasn't sent someone to find me if he's so bloody angry. Maybe should go by his place and say hi. Co-dependency, anyone?

6 P.M. Couldn't help it. Ran to mead-hall and leaped through high window; landed in middle of throne-room floor, interrupting some kind of v. boring war council. "Oh, it's you," Hrothgar said. Could tell he was trying to sound commanding.

Stood there stupidly as terrified humans quailed in horror at my shiny clean fangs. Finally, Hrothgar spoke up.

"I have sent for Beowulf."

Gaah! He's found someone else. Am so stupid! No, must have positive outlook and not punish self in manner of monster who has not read "Understanding the Really Scary Beast Within" with a highlighting pen. Still, feeling v. miserable about this. Feeling v. murderous.

"It's over," I hissed. Bounded through high window and went back to the fen. Munched on a deer and a water snake. Waited for this Beowulf.

Beowulf: A New Memoir Translation

by Frank McCourt

As I have said before, it is a mystery to me how I managed to live to adulthood, what with my father's taste for drink, my mother's weakness of the soul, and the great national tragedies that broke the back of my nation, Ireland. As I grew to manhood there in Limerick, as I roughhoused with my brother Malachy and watched my mother's spirits wax and wane, as I experienced love and loss and crept toward a kind of provisional wisdom that was no less impressive for being rendered in heavy dialect, I never once saw the fearsome monster known as Grendel.

I have also related, at some length, how I came to the United States aboard the M.S. Irish Oak in October, 1949, how the boat was originally intended to port in New York City but was diverted to Albany. It was not a perfect ship, and it was not a perfect passage. But aboard the Irish Oak I was privileged to have several fascinating conversations, although none of them concerned the proper pronunciation of the name "Ecgtheow," or the architecture of a mead-hall, or the finer points of patrilinear succession in pre-Christian Denmark. And, though I stood by the rail of the ship quite frequently and gazed out across the expanse of the sea, I never once saw the fearsome monster known as Grendel.

Beowulf: A New Monologue Translation

by David Letterman

Whew! Is it cold! Anybody feeling the cold?

[*Applause*]

I'll tell you, ladies and gentlemen, it was so cold today that Grendel had to pop them Danes into the microwave before he devoured them.

[*Laughter, applause*]

You ever pop any Danes in the microwave yourself, Paul?

[*Laughter, applause*]

Oh, by the way, I want to congratulate King Hrothgar. He's doing a great job over there in the palace. Apparently, he posted a sign on the front door of the place, "Closed for Mass Burials."

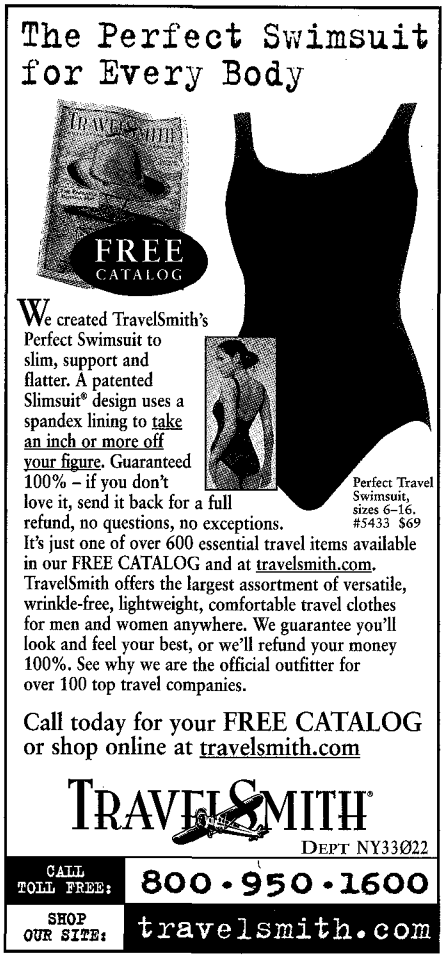
[*Laughter, applause*]

Anybody been down to the moors? I haven't been myself, but I hear that Grendel's lair has more bones in it than Elizabeth Taylor's garbage can.

[*Laughter, applause*]

You know, a week ago I wouldn't have given Hrothgar's troubles to a monkey on a rock. But I think things are looking up for him. They say in the papers that there's a new guy, Beowulf, coming to help the King with the monster. I just have one piece of advice for Mr. Beowulf: Run! Run for your life!

[*Laughter, applause*] ♦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THE NEW-BOY NETWORK

What do job interviews really tell us?

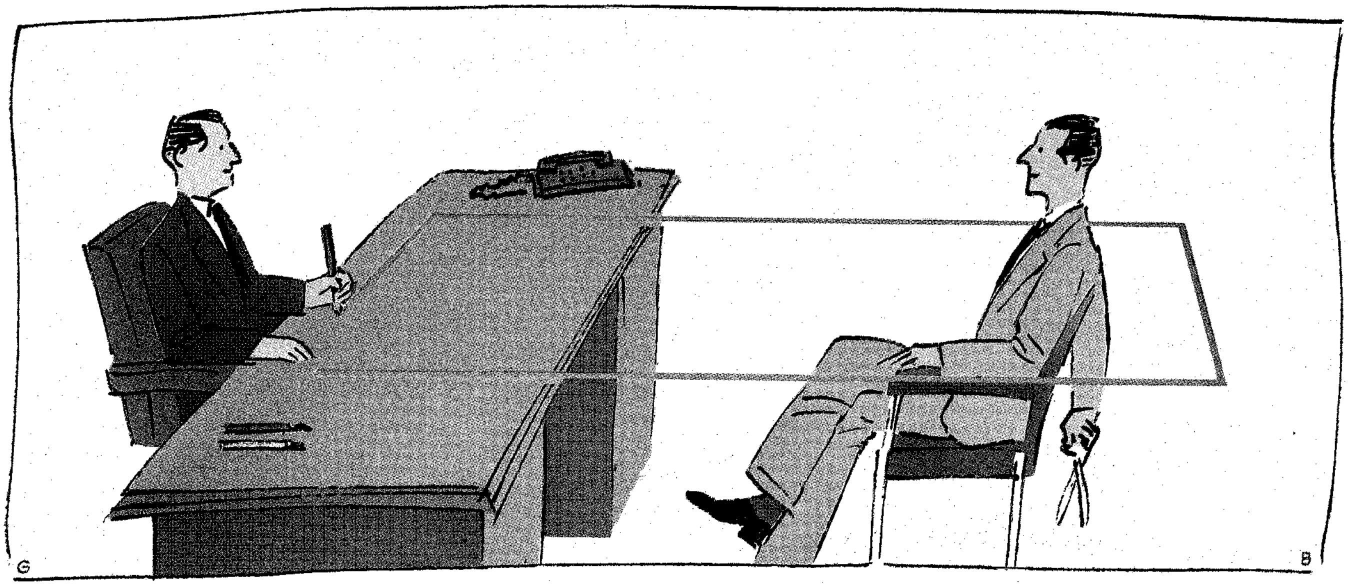
BY MALCOLM GLADWELL

Nolan Myers grew up in Houston, the elder of two boys in a middle-class family. He went to Houston's High School for the Performing and Visual Arts and then Harvard, where he intended to major in History and Science. After discovering the joys of writing code, though, he switched to computer science. "Programming is one of those things you get involved in, and you just can't stop until you finish," Myers says. "You get involved in it, and all of a sudden you look at your watch and it's four in the morning! I love the elegance of it." Myers is short and slightly stocky and has pale-blue eyes. He smiles easily, and when he speaks he moves his hands and torso for emphasis. He plays in a klezmer band called the Charvard Chai Notes. He talks to his parents a lot. He gets B's and B-pluses.

This spring, in the last stretch of his senior year, Myers spent a lot of time interviewing for jobs with technology companies. He talked to a company named Trilogy, down in Texas, but he didn't think he would fit in. "One of Trilogy's subsidiaries put ads out in the paper saying that they were looking for the top tech students, and that they'd give them two hundred thousand dollars and a BMW," Myers said, shaking his head in disbelief. In another of his interviews, a recruiter asked him to solve a programming problem, and he made a stupid mistake and the recruiter pushed the answer back across the table to him, saying that his "solution" accomplished nothing. As he remembers the moment, Myers blushes. "I was so nervous. I thought, Hmm, that sucks!" The way he says that, though, makes it hard to believe that he really was nervous, or maybe what Nolan Myers calls nervous the rest of us call a tiny flutter in the stomach. Myers doesn't seem like the sort to get flustered. He's the kind of person you would call the night before the big test in seventh grade, when nothing made sense and you had begun to panic.

I like Nolan Myers. He will, I am convinced, be very good at whatever career he chooses. I say those two things even though I have spent no more than ninety minutes in his presence. We met only once, on a sunny afternoon in April at the Au Bon Pain in Harvard Square. He was wearing sneakers and khakis and a polo shirt, in a dark-green pattern. He had a big backpack, which he plopped on the floor beneath the table. I bought him an orange juice. He fished around in his wallet and came up with a dollar to try and repay me, which I refused. We sat by the window. Previously, we had talked for perhaps three minutes on the phone, setting up the interview. Then I E-mailed him, asking him how I would recognize him at Au Bon Pain. He sent me the following message, with what I'm convinced—again, on the basis of almost no evidence—to be typical Myers panache: "22ish, five foot seven, straight brown hair, very good-looking. :)." I have never talked to his father, his mother, or his little brother, or any of his professors. I have never seen him ecstatic or angry or depressed. I know nothing of his personal habits, his tastes, or his quirks. I cannot even tell you why I feel the way I do about him. He's good-looking and smart and articulate and funny, but not *so* good-looking and smart and articulate and funny that there is some obvious explanation for the conclusions I've drawn about him. I just like him, and I'm impressed by him, and if I were an employer looking for bright young college graduates, I'd hire him in a heartbeat.

I heard about Nolan Myers from Hadi Partovi, an executive with Tellme, a highly touted Silicon Valley startup offering Internet access through the telephone. If you were a computer-science major at M.I.T., Harvard, Stanford, Caltech, or the University of Waterloo this spring, looking for a job in software, Tellme was probably at the top of your list. Partovi and I talked in the conference room at Tellme's offices, just off the soaring, open floor where all the firm's programmers and marketers and executives sit, some of them with bunk beds built over their desks. (Tellme recently moved into an old printing plant—a low-slung office building with a huge warehouse attached—and, in accordance with new-economy logic, promptly turned the old offices into a warehouse and the old warehouse into offices.) Partovi is a handsome man of twenty-seven, with olive skin and short curly black hair, and throughout our entire interview he sat with his chair tilted precariously at a forty-five-degree angle. At the end of a long riff about how hard it is to find high-quality people, he blurted out one name: Nolan Myers. Then, from memory, he rattled off Myers's telephone number. He very much wanted Myers to come to Tellme.



Companies use interviews to identify top recruits, but new research raises troubling questions about the power of first impressions.

GUY BILLOUT

Partovi had met Myers in January, during a recruiting trip to Harvard. "It was a heinous day," Partovi remembers. "I started at seven and went until nine. I'd walk one person out and walk the other in." The first fifteen minutes of every interview he spent talking about Tellme—its strategy, its goals, and its business. Then he gave everyone a short programming puzzle. For the rest of the hour-long meeting, Partovi asked questions. He remembers that Myers did well on the programming test, and after talking to him for thirty to forty minutes he became convinced that Myers had, as he puts it, "the right stuff." Partovi spent even less time with Myers than I did. He didn't talk to Myers's family, or see him ecstatic or angry or depressed, either. He knew that Myers had spent last summer as an intern at Microsoft and was about to graduate from an Ivy League school. But virtually everyone recruited by a place like Tellme has graduated from an élite university, and the Microsoft summer-internship program has more than six hundred people in it. Partovi didn't even know why he liked Myers so much. He just did. "It was very much a gut call," he says.

This wasn't so very different from the experience Nolan Myers had with Steve Ballmer, the C.E.O. of Microsoft. Earlier this year, Myers attended a party for former Microsoft interns called Gradbash. Ballmer gave a speech there, and at the end of his remarks Myers raised his hand. "He was talking a lot about aligning the company in certain directions," Myers told me, "and I asked him about how that influences his ability to make bets on other directions. Are they still going to make small bets?" Afterward, a Microsoft recruiter came up to Myers and said, "Steve wants your E-mail address." Myers gave it to him, and soon he and Ballmer were E-mailing. Ballmer, it seems, badly wanted Myers to come to Microsoft. "He did research on me," Myers says. "He knew which group I was interviewing with, and knew a lot about me personally. He sent me an E-mail saying that he'd love to have me come to Microsoft, and if I had any questions I should contact him. So I sent him a response, saying thank you. After I visited Tellme, I sent him an E-mail saying I was interested in Tellme, here were the reasons, that I wasn't sure yet, and if he had anything to say I said I'd love to talk to him. I gave him my number. So he called, and after playing phone tag we talked—about career trajectory, how Microsoft would influence my career, what he thought of Tellme. I was extremely impressed with him, and he seemed very genuinely interested in me."

What convinced Ballmer he wanted Myers? A glimpse! He caught a little slice of Nolan Myers in action and—just like that—the C.E.O. of a four-hundred-billion-dollar company was calling a college senior in his dorm room. Ballmer somehow knew he liked Myers, the same way Hadi Partovi knew, and the same way I knew after our little chat at Au Bon Pain. But what did we know? What could we know? By any reasonable measure, surely none of us knew Nolan Myers at all.

It is a truism of the new economy that the ultimate success of any enterprise lies with the quality of the people it hires. At many technology companies, employees are asked to all but live at the office, in conditions of intimacy that would have been unthinkable a generation ago. The artifacts of the prototypical Silicon Valley office—the videogames, the espresso bar, the bunk beds, the basketball hoops—are the elements of the rec room, not the workplace. And in the rec room you want to play only with your friends. But how do you find out who your friends are? Today, recruiters canvas the country for résumés. They analyze employment histories and their competitors' staff listings. They call references, and then do what I did with Nolan Myers: sit down with a perfect stranger for an hour and a half and attempt to draw conclusions about that stranger's intelligence and personality. The job interview has become one of the central conventions of the modern economy. But what, exactly, can you know about a stranger after sitting down and talking with him for an hour?

IF $\frac{dY}{dX} = \frac{4X^3 + X^2 - 12}{\sqrt{2X^2 - 9}}$, THEN

you are standing at the ocean,
in the moon's empirical light
each mercurial wave

like a parabola shifting on its axis,
the sea's dunes differentiated & graphed.
If this, then that. The poet

laughs. She wants to lie
in her own equation, the point slope
like a woman whispering *stay me*

with flagons. What is it to know the absolute value
of negative grace, to calculate
how the heart becomes the empty set

unintersectable, the first & the last?
But enough.
You are standing on the shore,

the parameters like wooden stakes.
Let *x* be the moon like a notary.
Let *y* be all things left unsaid.

Let the constant be the gold earth
waiting to envelop what remains,
the sieves of the lungs like two cones.

—*Amy Quan Barry*

Some years ago, an experimental psychologist at Harvard University, Nalini Ambady, together with Robert Rosenthal, set out to examine the nonverbal aspects of good teaching. As the basis of her research, she used videotapes of teaching fellows which had been made during a training program at Harvard. Her plan was to have outside observers look at the tapes with the sound off and rate the effectiveness of the teachers by their expressions and physical cues. Ambady wanted to have at least a minute of film to work with. When she looked at the tapes, though, there was really only about ten seconds when the teachers were shown apart from the students. "I didn't want students in the frame, because obviously it would bias the ratings," Ambady says. "So I went to my adviser, and I said, 'This isn't going to work.' "

But it did. The observers, presented with a ten-second silent video clip, had no difficulty rating the teachers on a fifteen-item checklist of personality traits. In fact, when Ambady cut the clips back to five seconds, the ratings were the same. They were even the same when she showed her raters just two seconds of videotape. That sounds unbelievable unless you actually watch Ambady's teacher clips, as I did, and realize that the eight seconds that distinguish the longest clips from the shortest are superfluous: anything beyond the first flash of insight is unnecessary. When we make a snap judgment, it really is made in a snap. It's also, very clearly, a judgment: we get a feeling that we have no difficulty articulating.

Ambady's next step led to an even more remarkable conclusion. She compared those snap judgments of teacher effectiveness with evaluations made, after a full semester of classes, by students of the same teachers. The correlation between the two, she found, was astoundingly high. A person watching a two-second silent video clip of a teacher he has never met will reach conclusions about how good that teacher is that are very similar to those of a student who sits in the teacher's class for an entire semester.

Recently, a comparable experiment was conducted by Frank Bernieri, a psychologist at the University of Toledo. Bernieri, working with one of his graduate students, Neha Gada-Jain, selected two people to act as interviewers, and trained them for six weeks in the proper procedures and techniques of giving an effective job interview. The two then interviewed ninety-eight volunteers, of various ages and backgrounds. The interviews lasted between fifteen and twenty minutes, and afterward each interviewer filled out a six-page, five-part evaluation of the person he'd just talked to. Originally, the intention of the study was to find out whether applicants who had been coached in certain nonverbal behaviors designed to ingratiate themselves with their interviewers—like mimicking the interviewers' physical gestures or posture—would get better ratings than applicants who behaved normally. As it turns out, they didn't. But then another of Bernieri's students, an undergraduate named Tricia Prickett, decided that she wanted to use the interview videotapes and the evaluations that had been collected to test out the adage that "the handshake is everything."

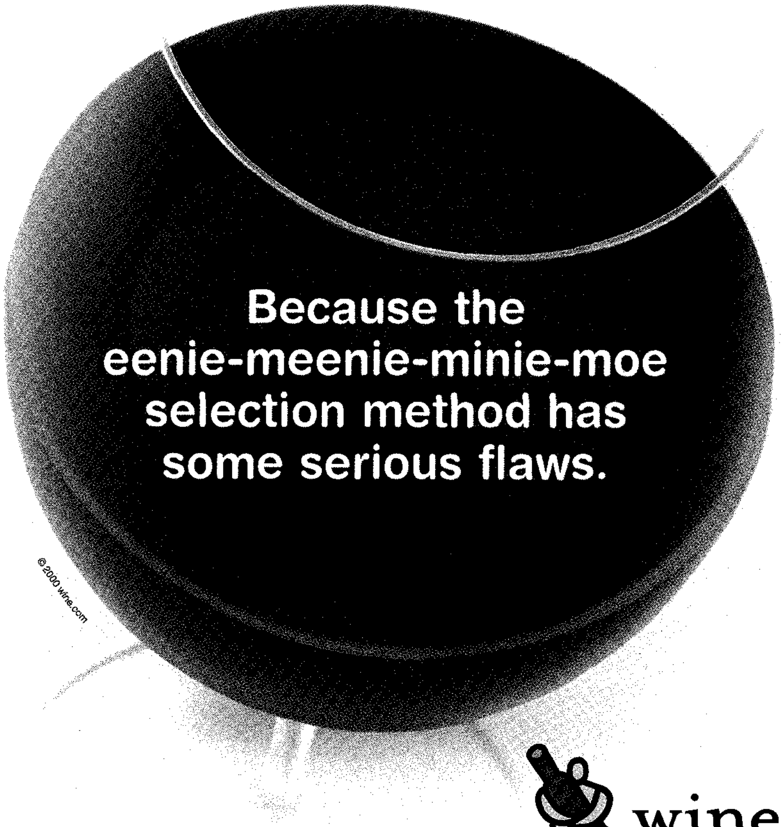
"She took fifteen seconds of videotape

showing the applicant as he or she knocks on the door, comes in, shakes the hand of the interviewer, sits down, and the interviewer welcomes the person," Bernieri explained. Then, like Ambady, Prickett got a series of strangers to rate the applicants based on the handshake clip, using the same criteria that the interviewers had used. Once more, against all expectations, the ratings were very similar to those of the interviewers. "On nine out of the eleven traits the applicants were being judged on, the observers significantly predicted the outcome of the interview," Bernieri says. "The strength of the correlations was extraordinary."

This research takes Ambady's conclusions one step further. In the Toledo experiment, the interviewers were trained in the art of interviewing. They weren't dashing off a teacher evaluation on their way out the door. They were filling out a formal, detailed questionnaire, of the sort designed to give the most thorough and unbiased account of an interview. And still their ratings weren't all that different from those of people off the street who saw just the greeting.

This is why Hadi Partovi, Steve Ballmer, and I all agreed on Nolan Myers. Apparently, human beings don't need to know someone in order to believe that they know someone. Nor does it make that much difference, apparently, that Partovi reached his conclusion after putting Myers through the wringer for an hour, I reached mine after ninety minutes of amiable conversation at Au Bon Pain, and Ballmer reached his after watching and listening as Myers asked a question.

Bernieri and Ambady believe that the power of first impressions suggests that human beings have a particular kind of prerational ability for making searching judgments about others. In Ambady's teacher experiments, when she asked her observers to perform a potentially distracting cognitive task—like memorizing a set of numbers—while watching the tapes, their judgments of teacher effectiveness were unchanged. But when she instructed her observers to think hard about their ratings before they made them, their accuracy suffered substantially. Thinking only gets in the way. "The brain structures that are involved here are very primitive," Ambady speculates. "All of these affective reactions are probably governed by the lower brain structures." What we are picking up in that first instant would seem to be something quite basic about a person's character, because what we conclude after two seconds is pretty much the same as what we conclude after twenty minutes or, indeed, an entire semester. "Maybe you can tell immediately whether someone is extroverted, or gauge the person's ability to communicate," Bernieri says. "Maybe these clues or cues are immediately accessible and apparent." Bernieri and Ambady are talking about the existence of a powerful form of human intuition. In a way, that's comforting, because it suggests that we can meet a perfect stranger and immediately pick up on



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something important about him. It means that I shouldn't be concerned that I can't explain why I like Nolan Myers, because, if such judgments are made without thinking, then surely they defy explanation.

But there's a troubling suggestion here as well. I believe that Nolan Myers is an accomplished and likable person. But I have no idea from our brief encounter how honest he is, or whether he is self-centered, or whether he works best by himself or in a group, or any number of other fundamental traits. That people who simply see the handshake arrive at the same conclusions as people who conduct a full interview also implies, perhaps, that those initial impressions matter too much—that they color all the other impressions that we gather over time.

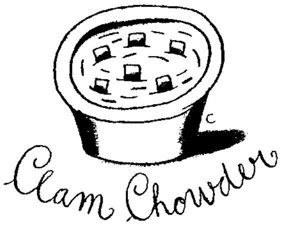
For example, I asked Myers if he felt nervous about the prospect of leaving school for the workplace, which seemed like a reasonable question, since I remember how anxious I was before my first job. Would the hours scare him? Oh no, he replied, he was already working between eighty and a hundred hours a week at school. "Are there things that you think you aren't good at, which make you worry?" I continued.

His reply was sharp: "Are there things that I'm not good at, or things that I can't learn? I think that's the real question. There are a lot of things I don't know anything about, but I feel comfortable that given the right environment and the right encouragement I can do well at." In my notes, next to that reply, I wrote "Great answer!" and I can remember at the time feeling the little thrill you experience as an interviewer when someone's behavior conforms with your expectations. Because I had decided, right off, that I liked him, what I heard in his answer was toughness and confidence. Had I decided early on that I didn't like Nolan Myers, I would have heard in that reply arrogance and bluster. The first impression becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: we hear what we expect to hear. The interview is hopelessly biased in favor of the nice.

When Ballmer and Partovi and I met Nolan Myers, we made a prediction. We looked at the way he behaved in our presence—at the way he talked and acted and seemed to think—and drew conclusions about how he would behave in other situations. I had decided, remember, that Myers was the kind of person you called the night before the big test in seventh grade. Was I right to make that kind of generalization?

This is a question that social psychologists have looked at closely. In the late nineteen-twenties, in a famous study, the psychologist Theodore Newcomb analyzed extroversion among adolescent boys at a summer camp. He found that how talkative a boy was in one setting—say, lunch—was highly predictive of how talkative that boy would be in the same setting in the future. A boy who was curious at lunch on Monday was likely to be curious at lunch on Tuesday. But his behavior in one setting told you almost nothing about how he would behave in a different setting: from how someone behaved at lunch, you couldn't predict how he would behave during, say, afternoon playtime. In a more recent study, of conscientiousness among students at Carleton College, the researchers Walter Mischel, Neil Lutsky, and Philip K. Peake showed that how neat a student's assignments were or how punctual he was told you almost nothing about how often he attended class or how neat his room or his personal appearance was. How we behave at any one time, evidently, has less to do with some immutable inner compass than with the particulars of our situation.

This conclusion, obviously, is at odds with our intuition. Most of the time, we assume that people display the same character traits in different situations. We habitually underestimate the large role that context plays in people's behavior. In the Newcomb summer-camp experiment, for example, the results showing how little consistency there was from one setting to another in talkativeness, curiosity, and gregariousness were tabulated from observations made and recorded by camp counsellors on the spot. But when, at the end of the summer, those same counsellors were asked to give their final impressions of the kids, they remembered the children's behavior as being highly consistent.



"The basis of the illusion is that we are somehow confident that we are getting what is there, that we are able to read off a person's disposition," Richard Nisbett, a psychologist at the University of Michigan, says. "When you have an interview with someone and have an hour with them, you don't conceptualize that as taking a sample of a person's behavior, let alone a possibly biased sample, which is what it is. What you think is that you are seeing a hologram, a small and fuzzy image but still the whole person."

Then Nisbett mentioned his frequent collaborator, Lee Ross, who teaches psychology at Stanford. "There was one term when he was teaching statistics and one term he was teaching a course with a lot of humanistic psychology. He gets his teacher evaluations. The first referred to him as cold, rigid, remote, finicky, and uptight. And the second described this wonderful warmhearted guy who was so deeply concerned with questions of community and getting students to grow. It was Jekyll and Hyde. In both cases, the students thought they were seeing the real Lee Ross."

Psychologists call this tendency—to fixate on supposedly stable character traits and overlook the influence of context—the Fundamental Attribution Error, and if you combine this error with what we know about snap judgments the interview becomes an even more problematic encounter. Not only had I let my first impressions color the information I gathered about Myers, but I had also assumed that the way he behaved with me in an interview setting was indicative of the way he would always behave. It isn't that the interview is useless; what I learned about Myers—that he and I get along well—is something I could never have got from a résumé or by talking to his references. It's just that our conversation turns out to have been less useful, and potentially more misleading, than I had supposed. That most

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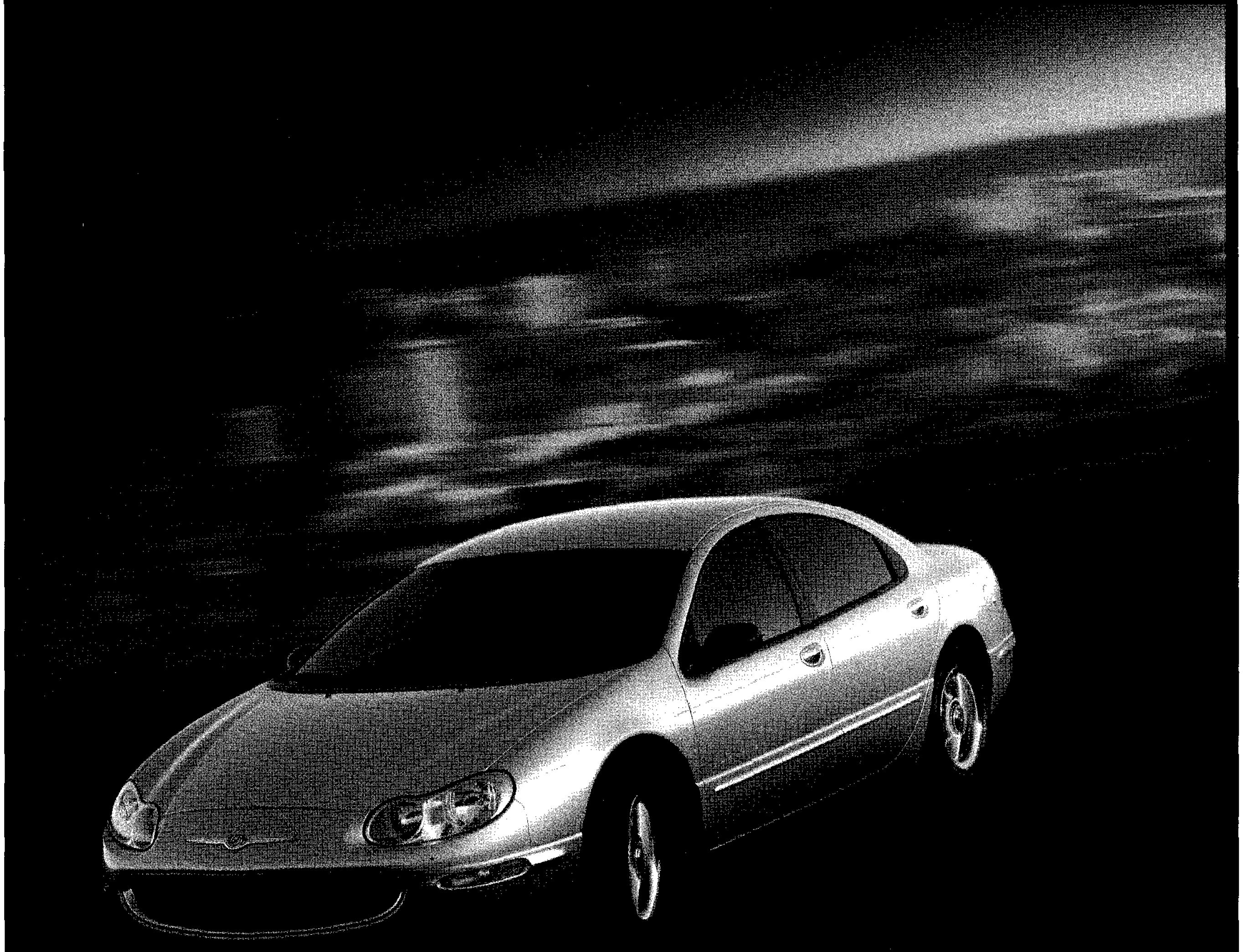

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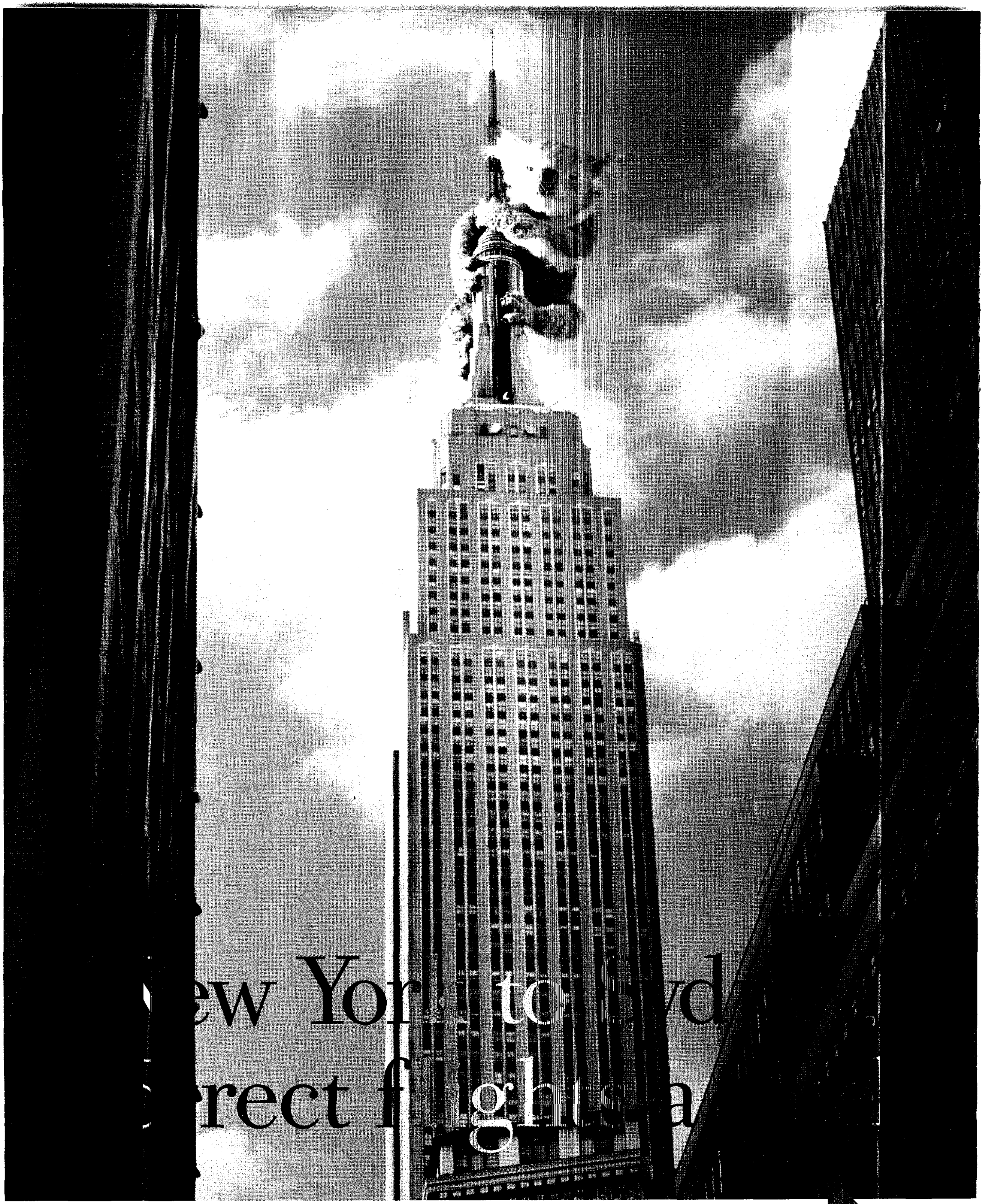

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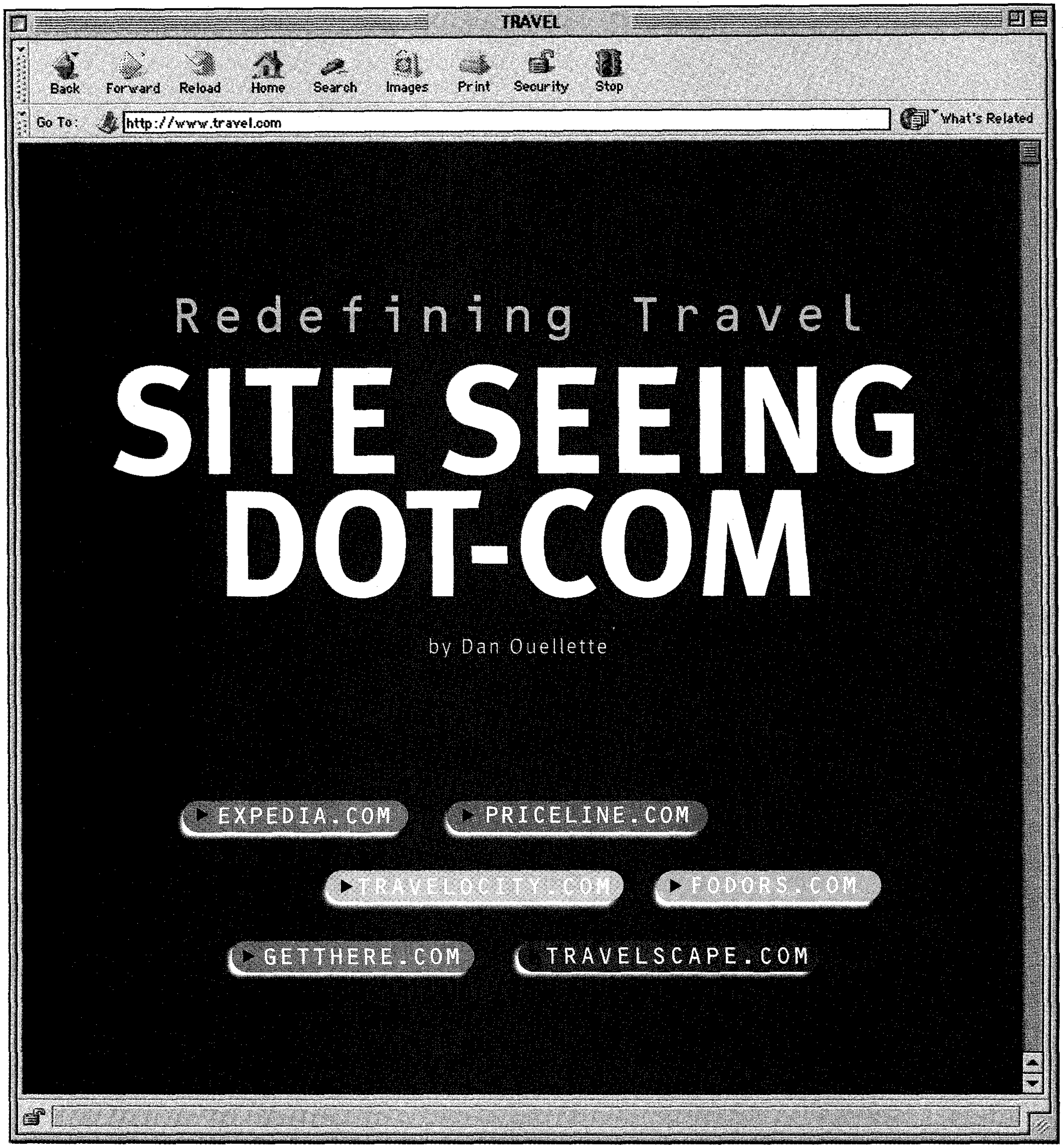
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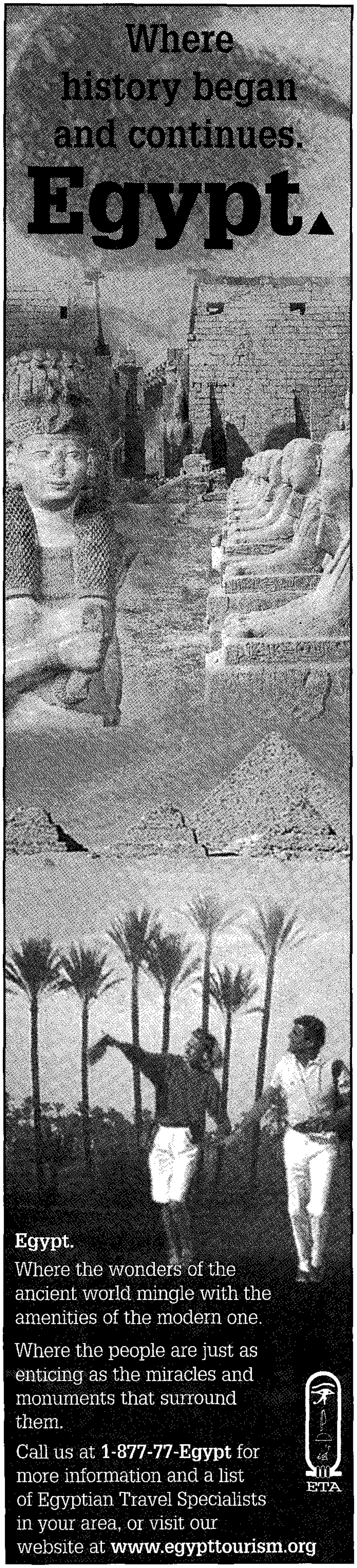
With the Internet serving as the new pal of wayfaring souls who are searching for a respite and a bargain to boot, there's now a plethora of Web sites that cater exclusively to travel. From full-service booking companies such as expedia.com and state-your-rate priceline.com to modest outfits that make special offers available exclusively by point-and-click pursuit, the age of travel dot-com has arrived. Travelocity.com commands first place in the Internet travel marketplace. It is the third largest e-commerce site following amazon.com and eBay respectively.

A few short years ago, doing business over the Internet was greeted with a hefty dose of skepticism, but today consumers who once hesitated to log on and type in their credit card numbers are eager to cut to the chase by going the dot-com route. Why such a speedy turnaround? In addition to on-line companies using encryption to guarantee secure sites, e-commerce has made great strides in the ease-of-transaction and expediency arenas. With its 24/7 business model, it's no wonder the Net is bustling with the kind of purchasing activity once reserved for Christmas season at the mall.

Although navigating the sea of Web travel for information on flights, hotels, car rentals, and tours may be tricky and even frustrating at times, it can nevertheless be rewarding. You can finally make that visit to the mystical land of Turkey or escape to that exotic vacation in New Zealand by scoring a deal that makes the trip affordable, comfortable, and educational.



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SURFING FOR FLY TIME

The Web has opened a new portal on the task of booking a flight. By logging on, you can gain access to computerized reservation systems—available in the pre-Internet Dark Ages only to travel agents and the carriers themselves.

Because airline ticket prices often change as quickly as the worth of a dot-com on the stock exchange, try scoping out the Web sites of individual airlines in search of reduced fares or special offers with a limited window of opportunity.

While Qantas (**qantas.com**) currently offers on-line booking only for flights within Australia and to select cities in New Zealand, its Web site provides information on the airline's arrival and departure times, news updates, and special offers. Qantas.com's "Flying with Us" section has practical information on in-flight accommodations. Select a class and qantas.com details what to expect from your temporary lodgings at thirty-thousand feet. For example, click on "International Economy Class" and you'll find a backgrounder on the hearty meals served. Or if you're going first class, read about amenities such as individual video screens, gourmet cuisine created by renowned Australian chef Neil Perry, and the sleeper seat, which can be completely reclined into a long bed.

VIRTUAL BROCHURES

Beyond saving dollars, one of the great Web advantages in travel planning is quality control. Pictures speak volumes when shopping for accommodations. Most hotels and resorts have constructed Web sites where you can view the lodging on-line; if satisfied, you can book reservations immediately. In some cases, the brochures permit you to inspect a variety of available rooms.

Pink Beach Club & Cottages (**pinkbeach.com**) in Bermuda allows you to sneak a colorful Web peek at its swimming pool, dining facilities, and rooms, each of which has a private balcony overlooking the ocean and pink-sand beach. Rates are posted and on-line reservations accepted. Likewise, The Buccaneer (**thebuccaneer.com**) in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, supplies room rates and offers special deals. In addition, you can download the hotel's full-color brochure by clicking on "QuickBrochures."

Recognizing the advantages of the Web in helping travellers plan their vacations, Internet Pictures Corporation (iPIX) has developed 360-degree virtual tour technology. The digital images enable on-line viewers to virtually visit a destination and inspect the surroundings. Several cruise lines and major hotels, including The Benjamin (**thebenjamin.com**) in New York, are already using iPIX services. By clicking on The Benjamin's "Virtual Tour" icon, you can drop by the luxury hotel to view its accommodations including its dining facilities, spa, and meeting spaces.

TOURISM DOT-COM

Web sites have proven to be major assets to tourism bureaus. In addition to placing the natural beauty of a country or state on digital exhibit, dot-com brochures can be updated constantly, accentuating upcoming events. For example, Tourism Bonaire (**infobonaire.com**) prominently displays the upcoming 4th Annual Bonaire Dive Festival, which will take place from June 10–17, in addition to providing extensive information about the island.

The New Mexico Department of Tourism (**newmexico.org**) uses its Web site to supply details on travel to the "Land of Enchantment." It boasts audio-visual sample tours and the "Route 66: America's Mother Road" link, which has a clickable map of important landmarks and scenic side trips. While the site is updated weekly, up-to-the-minute information on arts and cultural events in northern New Mexico can be found at **sfnewmexican.com**. This Web site is the on-line version of *The Santa Fe New Mexican*, the oldest newspaper in the West and one of the last family-owned dailies.

Tourism New Zealand (**purenz.com**) supplies a comprehensive listing of accommodations, with links to many hoteliers' home pages where E-mail addresses are provided so reservations can be booked on-line. Information on transport and package tours within New Zealand is also available along with e-commerce links. There's an events calendar of annual festivities, an electronic guest book that allows visitors to post their memories, and a postcard page for those who elect to E-mail a digital postcard home.

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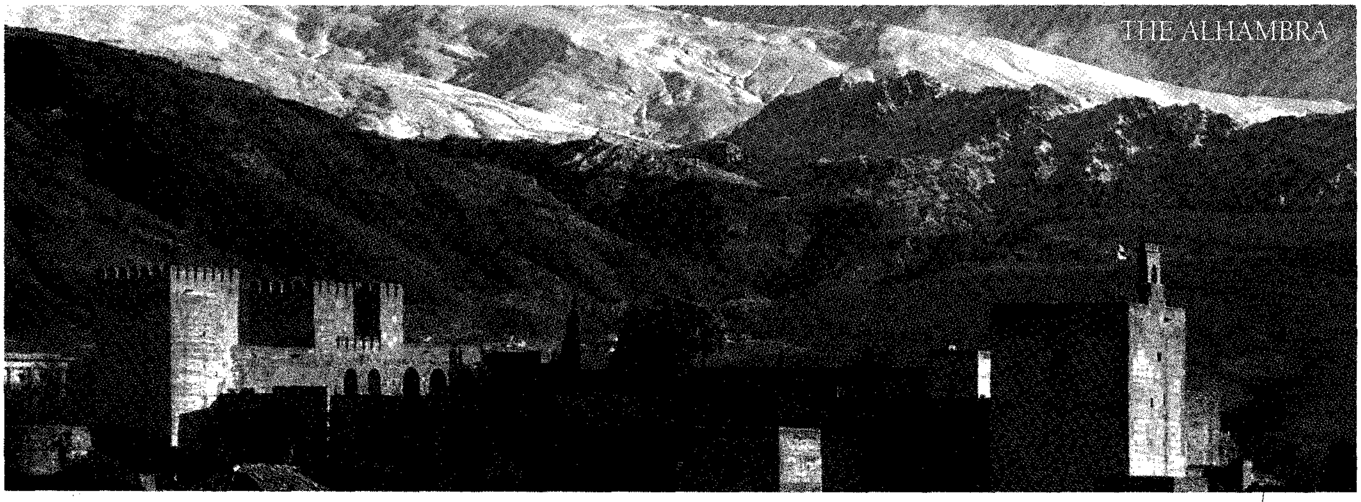

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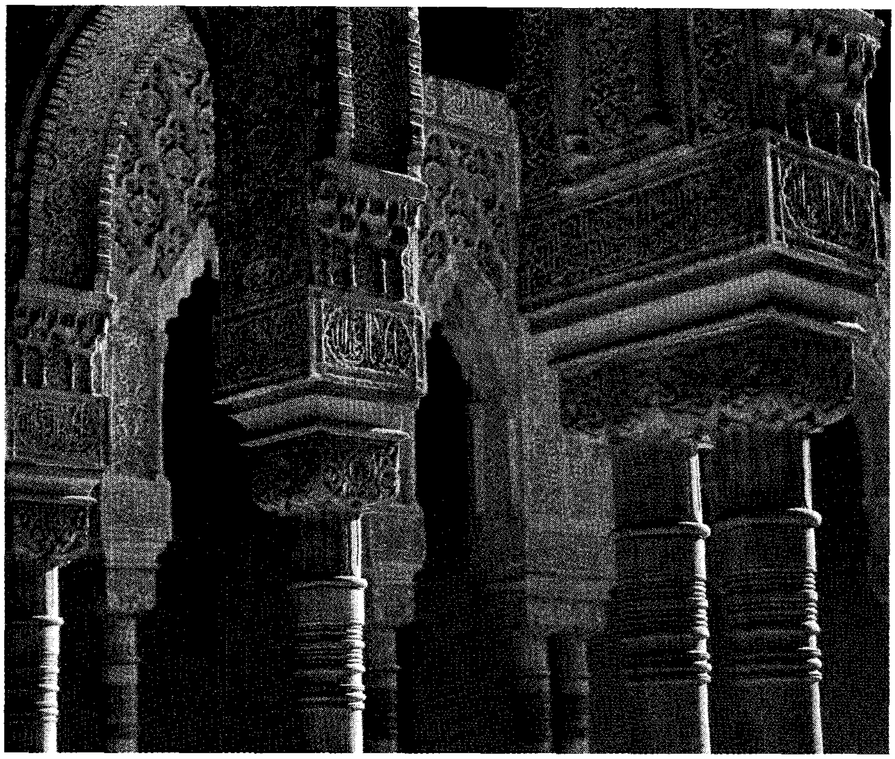
BRAVO Spain!

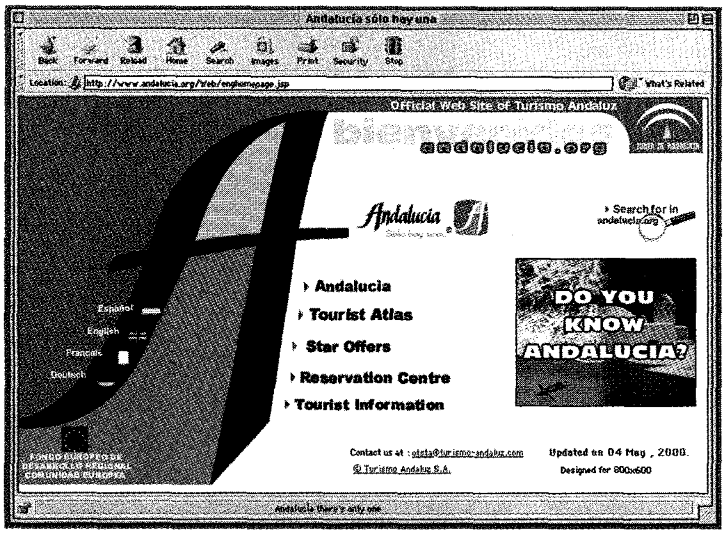
tourism dot-com continued



The Tourist Office of Spain recently unveiled a new Web site (**spain2000.org**) that focuses on the four regions of Andalucia, Cantabria, Castilla y León, and Madrid. It also offers a link to the site's official airline sponsor Air Europa.

Andalucia travel tips can be found via a link to andalucia.org. (Worthy of note: Use the Spanish spelling for Andalucia if you input its URL. Otherwise you'll end up at a Web domain registered by an Internet service group in Andalusia, Alabama.)

Known as the bridge between two continents (Europe and Africa) at the meeting of two seas (the Atlantic and Mediterranean), Andalucia offers diverse tour possibilities that range from Granada's hilltop citadel, Alhambra to Córdoba's great mosque to the rich history and romance of Seville. After choosing English as your surfing language, take a cyber-tour of Andalucia's history and peruse the virtual tourist information and reservation centers. Worth a special look-see is the "Star Offers" section, where some of the region's best—and most unusual—attractions are highlighted.



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Designed for 800x600

To aid in booking reservations as well as ensuring quality tourist services, the Tourist Office of Spain's new site, **spain2000.org**, connects to several U.S.-based tour operators including Abreu Tours, Central Holidays, 4th Dimension, Freegate Tourism, Key Tours, Petrabax Tours, Pinto Basto Tours, and Spanish Heritage Tours.

All belong to the Spain Tour Operators Association (STOA), a professional organization of tour operators who are committed to putting the wonders of the country on exhibit. Each member brings years of experience to providing upscale travel opportunities in Spain. Click on individual tour operator links to request brochures, as well as gather information on various destinations, package services, and motorcoach tours.

Go to "A Community Reborn" to discover the story of Las Menas, an abandoned iron ore mining village resurrected as a unique rural hostelry. The old homes have been renovated and are now a part of a charming country hotel. Or consider the possibilities of touring the wild region of Andalucia by going to "The Secrets of Despeñaperros," a page that spotlights the twenty-thousand-acre rugged wilderness park. Other "Star Offers" selections include information on Moorish history and religious traditions.

Top Columns of Alhambra © Kevin Schafer/Corbis; *left* hand carved door in Andalucia © Michelle Chaplow/Corbis

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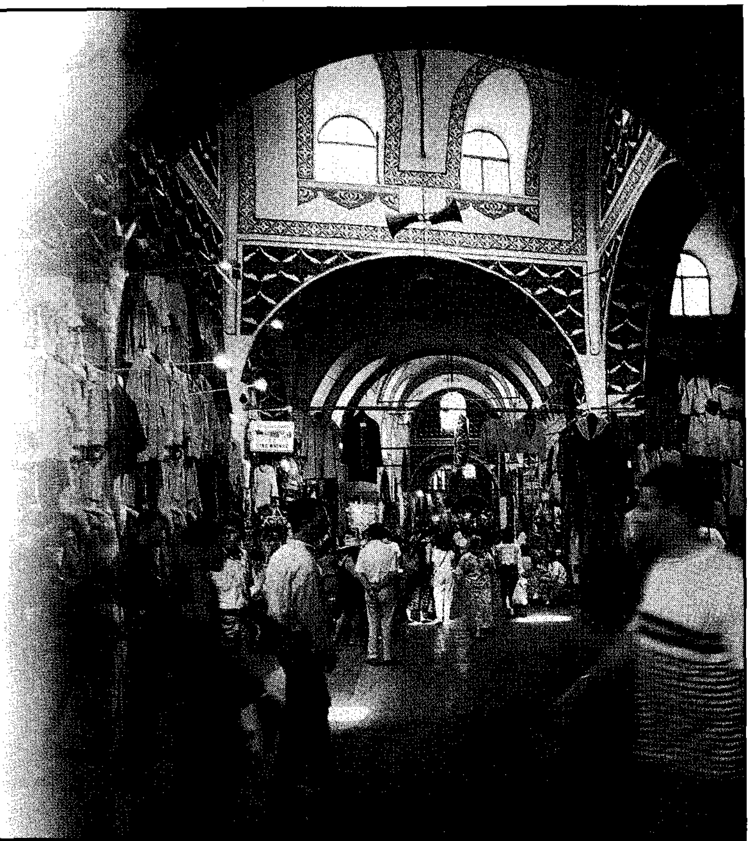

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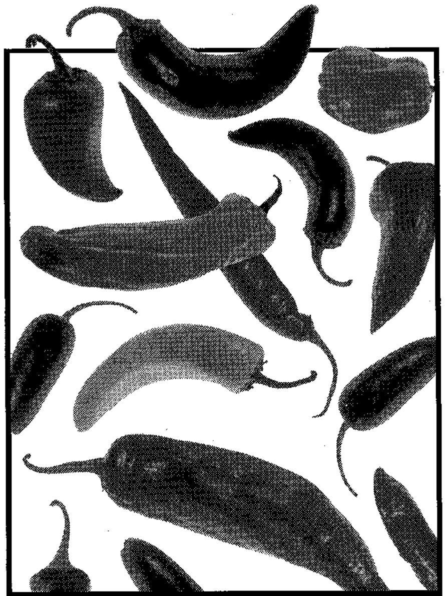

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The Turkish Ministry of Tourism (**tourismturkey.org**) offers a full day's worth of on-line meandering through the riches of Turkey's culture and history. Its site not only showcases such illustrious tourist stops as the Topkapi Palace and the sixteenth-century Blue Mosque in Istanbul, but also offers a bounty of lesser-known attractions. Especially impressive is the section on Turkish cuisine, highlighted by enticing pictures of delicacies with ingredients harvested from Turkey's mountains or from its surrounding four seas. Complementing the Ministry of Tourism's site is turkey.org, operated by the Embassy of the Republic of Turkey. It provides an in-depth profile of the country along with topical news, a monthly events calendar, and tourist information.

The Egyptian Tourist Authority (**egypttourism.org**) uses its site to provide information on Egypt's history as well as modern cultural pursuits. Given that this country's antiquities have irresistible allure, schedules of Nile River ferry service and outdoor light shows at pyramids and temples in Cairo, Luxor, and Aswan are provided. Keeping in on-line touch with today's Egypt apprises visitors of such upcoming events as the International Documentary Film Festival in July and the Cairo International Song Festival in August.

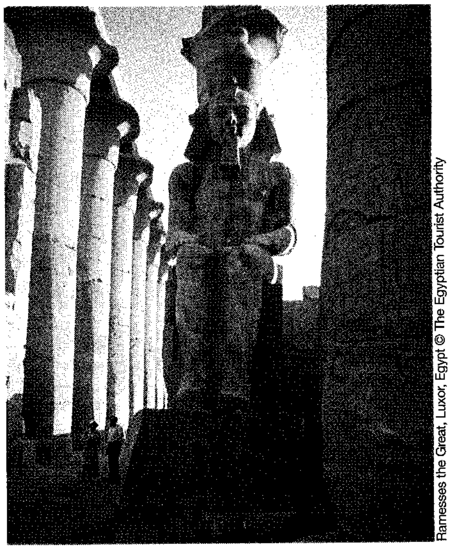
TRAVEL TO GO

The Web disseminates information much faster and more widely than print-on-paper. That's why such tour operators as TravLtips (**travltips.com**), which books cruise travel (from Victorian-style steamboating to international freighters), and Amelia Tours (**ameliainternational.com**), a specialist in connoisseur tours to such off-the-beaten-path Mediterranean destinations as Sicily and Cyprus, use their Web sites to notify browsers of last-minute travel opportunities.

For an interactive on-line experience, proceed to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (**mmfa.qc.ca**) where you can use the site's high-tech graphics to create your own digital artwork that will be hung in a virtual exhibition space. But the real draw is the museum's permanent collection and an upcoming exhibit fresh from Paris, "From Renoir to Picasso: Masterpieces from the Musée de l'Orangerie," which runs from June 1st to October 15th. MMFA is providing a sneak preview of what to expect by virtually hanging twenty-two of the eighty-one paintings on its Web site.

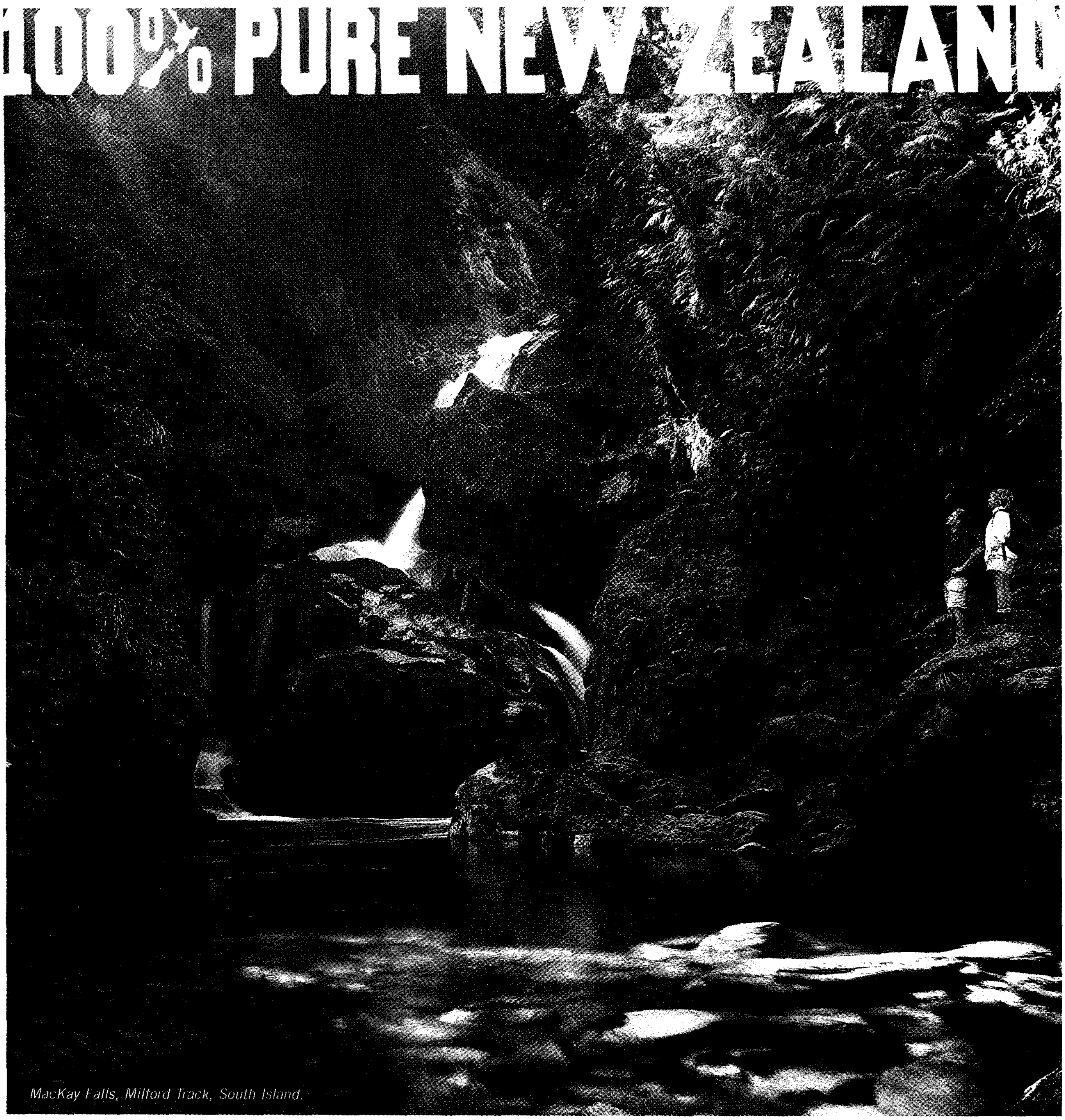
So, does the Internet really make a difference when it comes to travel? Randonnée Tours (**randonneetours.com**), the Winnipeg-based company specializing in self-guided European cycling, walking, and driving tours, certainly believes so. It reports that more than a third of its sales in 1999 was attributable to people who logged onto their Web site or found them through Internet links; in the first quarter of this year that figure leaped to more than half.

With traffic on the Internet increasing and site seeing on the World Wide Web growing exponentially, most on-line perusers have bookmarked their favorite URLs. To augment your list, consider this year's nominees for Webby Awards (the digerati's equivalent of the Oscars) in the travel category: citysync.com (linked to guide books published by Lonely Planet); travel.discovery.com (the on-line feature of Discovery's Travel channel); sierraclub.org (the environmental group's Web site); outsidemag.com (the digital version of *Outside* magazine); and previewtravel.com (the travel planning site).



Ramesses the Great, Luxor, Egypt © The Egyptian Tourist Authority

So, before you go off to explore the real world, take a tour of the virtual world to prepare. And one final bit of advice: Unless you're slipping in a quick moment of R. and R. between business stopovers, unplug—leave your laptop at home, and take in the actual sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the planet without a digital filter.



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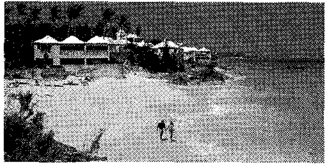

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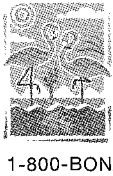

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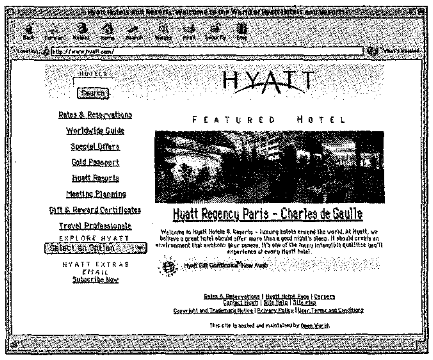
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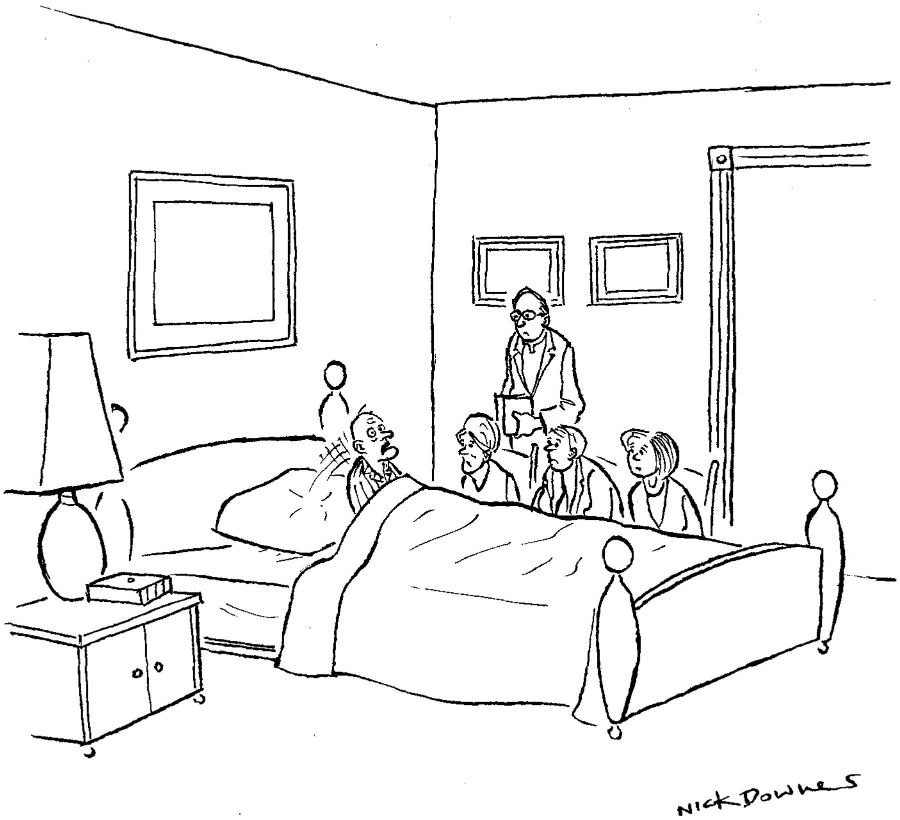

"I've forgotten what I want to be remembered for."

basic of human rituals—the conversation with a stranger—turns out to be a minefield.

• •

Not long after I met with Nolan Myers, I talked with a human-resources consultant from Pasadena named Justin Menkes. Menkes's job is to figure out how to extract meaning from face-to-face encounters, and with that in mind he agreed to spend an hour interviewing me the way he thinks interviewing ought to be done. It felt, going in, not unlike a visit to a shrink, except that instead of having months, if not years, to work things out, Menkes was set upon stripping away my secrets in one session.

Consider, he told me, a commonly asked question like "Describe a few situations in which your work was criticized. How did you handle the criticism?" The problem, Menkes said, is that it's much too obvious what the interviewee is supposed to say. "There was a situation where I was working on a project, and I didn't do as well as I could have," he said, adopting a mock-sincere singsong. "My boss gave me some constructive criticism. And I redid the project. It hurt. Yet we worked it out." The same is true of the question "What would your friends say about you?"—to which the correct answer (preferably preceded by a pause, as if to suggest that it had never dawned on you that someone would ask such a question) is "My guess is that they would call me a people person—either that or a hard worker."

Myers and I had talked about obvious questions, too. "What is your greatest weakness?" I asked him. He answered, "I tried to work on a project my freshman year, a children's festival. I was trying to start a festival as a benefit here in Boston. And I had a number of guys working with me. I started getting concerned with the scope of the project we were working on—how much responsibility we had, getting things done. I really put the brakes on, but in retrospect I really think we could have done it and done a great job."

Then Myers grinned and said, as an aside, "Do I truly think that is a fault? Honestly, no." And, of course, he's right. All I'd really asked him was whether he could describe a personal strength as if it were a weakness, and, in answering as he did, he had merely demonstrated his knowledge of the unwritten rules of the interview.

But, Menkes said, what if those questions were rephrased so that the answers weren't obvious? For example: "At your weekly team meetings, your boss unexpectedly begins aggressively critiquing your performance on a current project. What do you do?"

I felt a twinge of anxiety. What would I do? I remembered a terrible boss I'd had years ago. "I'd probably be upset," I said. "But I doubt I'd say anything. I'd probably just walk away." Menkes gave no indication whether he was concerned or pleased by that answer. He simply pointed out that another person might well have said something like "I'd go and see my boss later in private, and confront him about why he embarrassed me in front of my team." I was saying that I would probably handle criticism—even inappropriate criticism—from a superior with stoicism; in the second case, the applicant was saying he or she would adopt a more confrontational style. Or, at least, we were telling the interviewer that the workplace demands either stoicism or confrontation—and to Menkes these are revealing and pertinent pieces of information.

Menkes moved on to another area—handling stress. A typical question in this area is something like "Tell me about a time when you had to do several things at once. How did you handle the situation? How did you decide what to do first?" Menkes says this is also too easy. "I just had to be very organized," he began again in his mock-sincere singsong. "I had to multitask. I had to prioritize and delegate appropriately. I checked in frequently with my boss." Here's how Menkes rephrased it: "You're in a situation where you have two very important responsibilities that both have a deadline that is impossible to meet. You cannot accomplish both. How do you handle that situation?"

"Well," I said, "I would look at the two and decide what I was best at, and then go to my boss and say, 'It's better that I do one well than both poorly,' and

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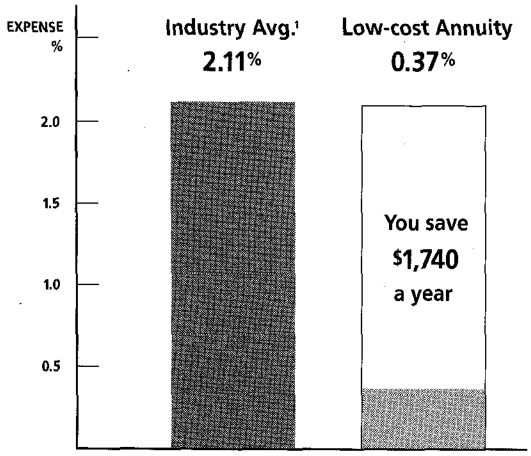

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we'd figure out who else could do the other task."

Menkes immediately seized on a telling detail in my answer. I was interested in what job I would do best. But isn't the key issue what job the *company* most needed to have done? With that comment, I had revealed something valuable: that in a time of work-related crisis I start from a self-centered consideration. "Perhaps you are a bit of a solo practitioner," Menkes said diplomatically. "That's an essential bit of information."

Menkes deliberately wasn't drawing any broad conclusions. If we are not people who are shy or talkative or outspoken but people who are shy in some contexts, talkative in other situations, and outspoken in still other areas, then what it means to know someone is to catalogue and appreciate all those variations. Menkes was trying to begin that process of cataloguing. This interviewing technique is known as "structured interviewing," and in studies by industrial psychologists it has been shown to be the only kind of interviewing that has any success at all in predicting performance in the workplace. In the structured interviews, the format is fairly rigid. Each applicant is treated in precisely the same manner. The questions are scripted. The interviewers are carefully trained, and each applicant is rated on a series of predetermined scales.

What is interesting about the structured interview is how narrow its objectives are. When I interviewed Nolan Myers I was groping for some kind of global sense of who he was; Menkes seemed entirely uninterested in arriving at that same general sense of me—he seemed to realize how foolish that expectation was for an hour-long interview. The structured interview works precisely because it isn't really an interview; it isn't about getting to know someone, in a traditional sense. It's as much concerned with rejecting information as it is with collecting it.

Not surprisingly, interview specialists have found it extraordinarily difficult to persuade most employers to adopt the structured interview. It just doesn't feel right. For most of us, hiring someone is essentially a romantic process, in which the job interview functions as a desexualized version of a date. We are looking for someone with whom we have a certain chemistry, even if the coupling that results ends in tears and the pursuer and the pursued turn out to have nothing in common. We want the unlimited promise of a love affair. The structured interview, by contrast, seems to offer only the dry logic and practicality of an arranged marriage.

Nolan Myers agonized over which job to take. He spent half an hour on the phone with Steve Ballmer, and Ballmer was very persuasive. "He gave me very, very good advice," Myers says of his conversations with the Microsoft C.E.O. "He felt that I should go to the place that excited me the most and that I thought would be best for my career. He offered to be my mentor." Myers says he talked to his parents every day about what to do. In February, he flew out to California and spent a Saturday going from one Tellme executive to another, asking and answering questions. "Basically, I had three things I was looking for. One was long-term goals for the company. Where did they see themselves in five years? Second, what position would I be playing in the company?" He stopped and burst out laughing. "And I forget what the third one is." In March, Myers committed to Tellme.

Will Nolan Myers succeed at Tellme? I think so, although I honestly have no idea. It's a harder question to answer now than it would have been thirty or forty years ago. If this were 1965, Nolan Myers would have gone to work at I.B.M. and worn a blue suit and sat in a small office and kept his head down, and the particulars of his personality would not have mattered so much. It was not so important that I.B.M. understood who you were before it hired you, because you understood what I.B.M. was. If you walked through the door at Armonk or at a branch office in Illinois, you knew what you had to be and how you were supposed to act. But to walk through the soaring, open offices of Tellme, with the bunk beds over the desks, is to be struck by how much more demanding the culture of Silicon Valley is. Nolan Myers will not be provided with a social script, that blue suit and organization chart. Tellme, like any technology startup these days, wants its employees to be part of a fluid team, to be flexible and innovative, to work with shifting groups in the absence of hierarchy and bureaucracy, and in that environment, where the workplace doubles as the rec room, the particulars of your personality matter a great deal.

This is part of the new economy's appeal, because Tellme's soaring warehouse is a more productive and enjoyable place to work than the little office boxes of the old I.B.M. But the danger here is that we will be led astray in judging these newly important particulars of character. If we let personability—some indefinable, preational intuition, magnified by the Fundamental Attribution Error—bias the hiring process today, then all we will have done is replace the old-boy network, where you hired your nephew, with the new-boy network, where you hire whoever impressed you most when you shook his hand. Social progress, unless we're careful, can merely be the means by which we replace the obviously arbitrary with the not so obviously arbitrary.

Myers has spent much of the past year helping to teach Introduction to Computer Science. He realized, he says, that one of the reasons that students were taking the course was that they wanted to get jobs in the software industry. "I decided that, having gone through all this interviewing, I had developed some expertise, and I would like to share that. There is a real skill and art in presenting yourself to potential employers. And so what we did in this class was talk about the kinds of things that employers are looking for—what are they looking for in terms of personality. One of the most important things is that you have to come across as being confident in what you are doing and in who you are. How do you do that? Speak clearly and smile." As he said that, Nolan Myers smiled. "For a lot of people, that's a very hard skill to learn. But for some reason I seem to understand it intuitively." ◆

From the Bethel (Maine) Citizen.

Mel Culpa, Mel Culpa, Mel Culpa: for those of you who aren't Catholic or who don't speak Latin, that means I'm sorry, sorry, sorry about last week's non column.

Not half as sorry as Mel.

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SEARCH AND DEPLOY

The race to build a better search engine.

BY MICHAEL SPECTER

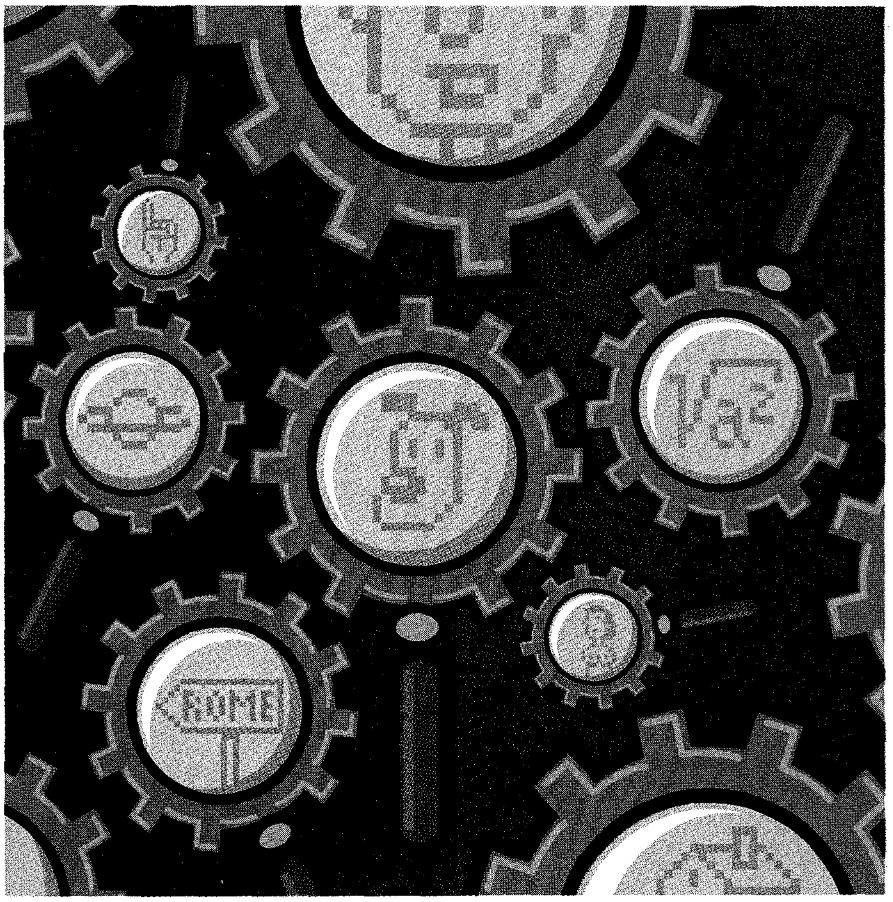
It's not easy to impress the people who fly into Scottsdale, Arizona, each spring to attend the annual PC Forum. The event, organized by the Internet impresario Esther Dyson, is held at a resort near the foot of the McDowell Mountains, and it has become a sort of digital Renaissance Weekend. This year, the conference was so heavily stocked with the fatted calves of the "new" economy—most of them dressed in the casual E-commerce outfit of khaki pants and blue oxford shirt—that controllers at Scottsdale's tiny airport struggled to accommodate all the corporate jets.

The Dyson conference began as a specialized gathering twenty-three years ago, when the Web was mostly a military secret. Like the Internet itself, however, the PC Forum has spread far beyond its initial boundaries. (It retains its quaint name as a reminder of what it was; these days, PCs are beside the point.) "We try hard to keep the meetings from becoming just a survey of what's going on," Ms. Dyson told me, when I asked her how she decided what to focus on each year.

Order is on Dyson's mind at the moment because the Internet has become so resistant to discipline. There are now more than a billion pages on the World Wide Web, all loosely tied together by seven billion annotated links, called hyperlinks, which is at least one link for every person on the planet. Each day, more than a million pages are added, and a page can appear in any language, written by any person, for any reason; it can be three lines long or the length of the Bible. For the first time in history, people everywhere have access to the thoughts, products, and writing of a large—and growing—percentage of the earth's population.

This much democracy can be daunting. As more information fills the Web, and more people become dependent upon it, search engines—programs that hunt for Web pages in response to specific words or phrases—have become overwhelmed. "People are beginning to feel a little lost in all this opportunity," Dyson said. "For the Internet to work, and to be liberating, it has to be easy to use."

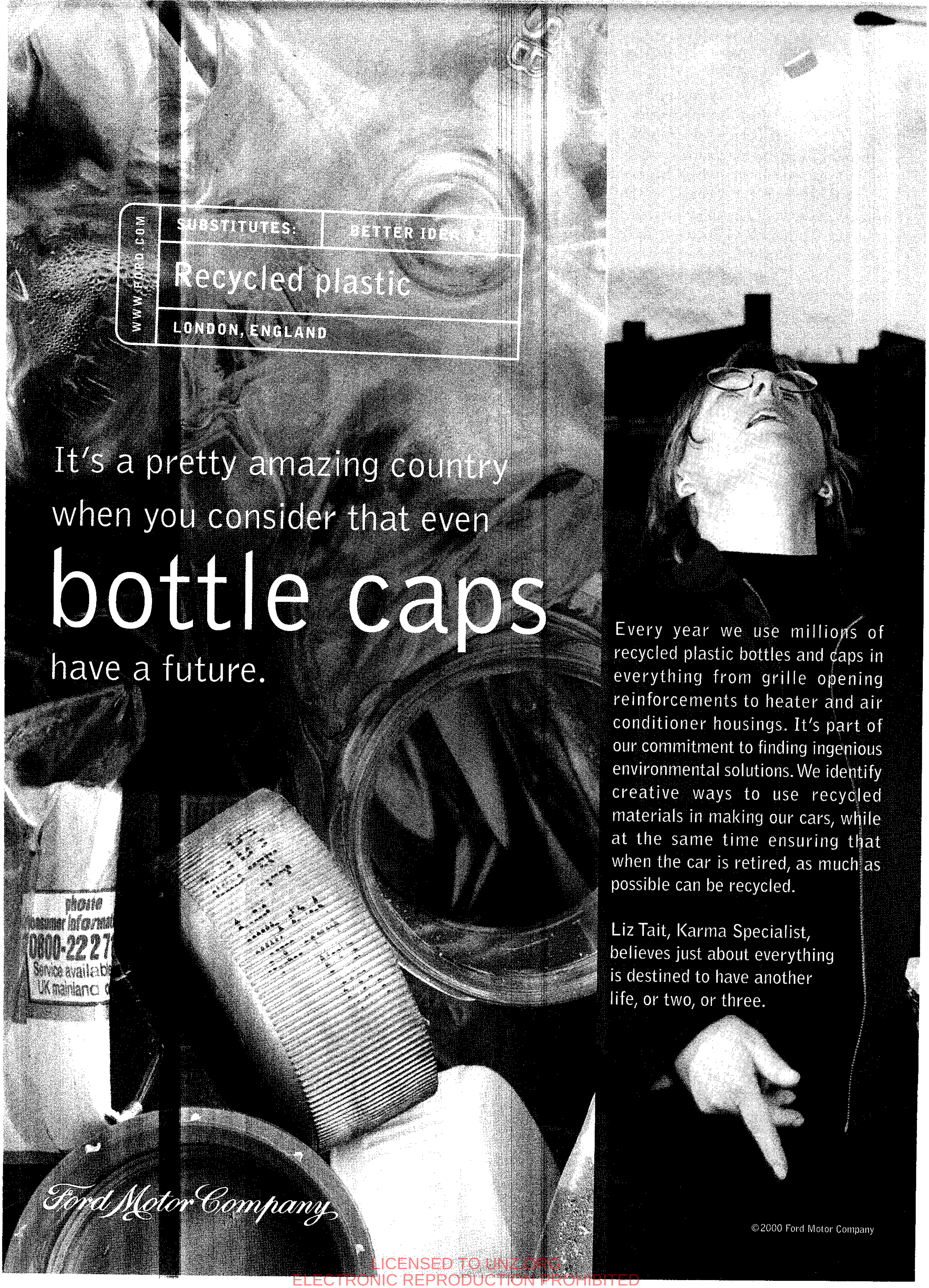
Too often, however, it is not. When I type "How do you skin a mule?" into most search engines, for example, I get thousands of answers—and they refer to everything from drug dealers to shoes to skin color and radiation treatment for a variety of cancers. Most answers are useless. If I want to know the current population of Rome and type the phrase "population of Rome" into Infoseek, a well-known search engine, approximately twenty-nine thousand replies come back, and among the first are pages on "world depopulation and slavery" and "the history of the white race," and a page titled "The Cure of the Neurobiological Sickness of Religion, Part 2."



Google's PageRank system made it the default search engine for the digital in-crowd.

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

The reason for the muddle is simple: most search engines are programmed to unleash software called "spiders," which systematically crawl through the Web sucking up every link on every page. When they have digested what they have found, the spiders generate indexes of the words and the links. So even if the word "population" appears in a sentence about ancient Greece, and the word "Rome" appears far away on the same page, perhaps in an advertisement for a hotel in upstate New York, most search engines would consider the page relevant. It would have been easier to track down Rome's chief demographer. "It's ironic, but, the bigger the Internet gets, the more difficult it is to find a simple, accurate answer to your questions," Lawrence Page told me before the first major presentation,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Liz Tait, Karma Specialist, believes just about everything is destined to have another life, or two, or three.

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on navigating the World Wide Web, at this year's PC Forum.

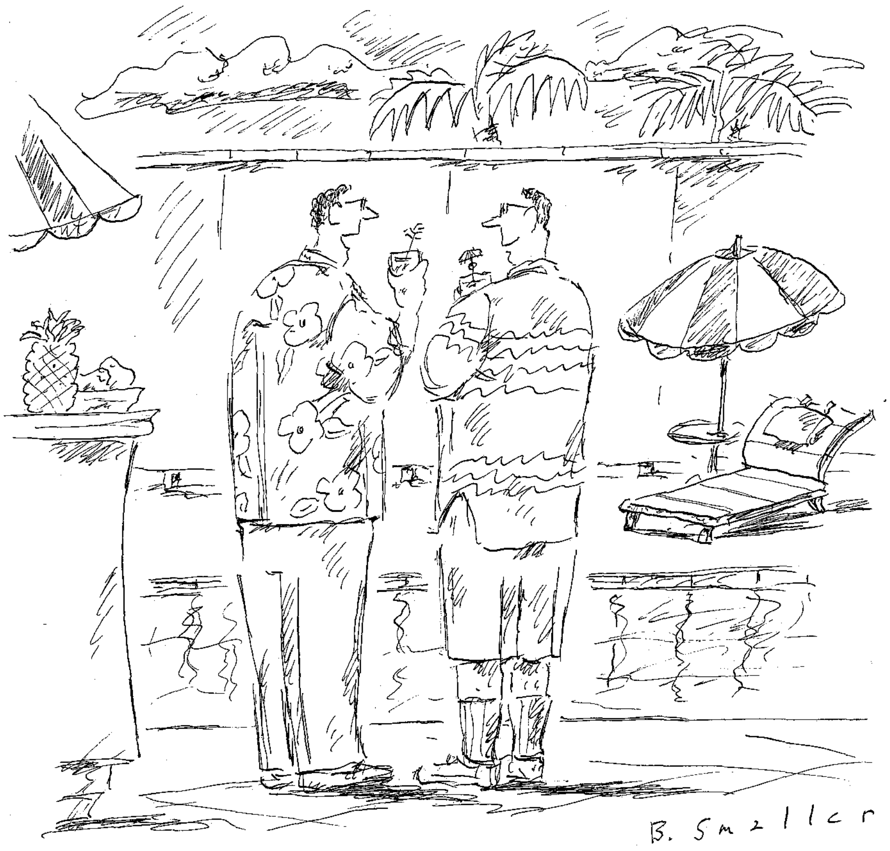
At the age of twenty-seven, Page runs—with a fellow former Stanford graduate student, Sergey Brin—a small company, based in Mountain View, California, named Google, which has become the default search engine of the digital in-crowd. "The more information there is out there, the more likely you are to get junk or lies for an answer," Page told me. "You want relevant information, but you are fighting with chaos."

The moderator of the presentation, Kevin Werbach, was having trouble getting the audience to focus, because everyone was distracted by a series of seemingly unrelated phrases scrolling by on a giant screen: "Fishing boats. Lesson plans format. ICRA. Woodpecker control. Origin of God." (Google, which derives from the word "googol"—the numeral one followed by a hundred zeros—had set up a live feed of the thirteen million queries that it gets each day.) "Unholy dancers. Drug testing in high schools. Compulsive hoarding. Free wife-swapping stories. Bald. Shaved."

"Let's go to the panel," Werbach said as the scroll continued. "Hopefully, it will be more interesting than seeing the queries." That produced a chorus of boos, because it's hard to imagine a computer conference generating anything more exciting than the thrill of watching what the world is trying to find out.

A few days after the conference ended, I walked into the Gates Computer Science Building at Stanford University. It is a gaudy place on a campus that works hard at being sedate, and it is where Page and Brin were working toward Ph.D.s when they thought up the idea of Google. I had come to see Rajeev Motwani, an associate professor in the computer-science department and the author of a standard work on computational algorithms—the mathematical recipes that make software work. Motwani, a cheerful thirty-seven-year-old man with short black hair, a mustache, and eyes the color of wet coal, has spent a lot of his recent career trying to figure out a better way to search.

Before the Internet, there were electronic information services—like Lexis-Nexis—but they have always been narrowly focussed, expensive, and, for most people, difficult to deploy. When the World Wide Web came into popular use, people realized that search engines were a powerful tool. Most people, though, never understood that the searches were limited and that the quality of the results varied greatly. (This is still true; even the largest of the search engines, Inktomi, has indexed only about half the Web. So far, the rest is dark matter; if the page you want is trapped there, it doesn't make any difference which search engine you use.)



"Meritocracy worked for my grandfather, it worked for my father, and it's working for me."

It is common knowledge that if a search fails to retrieve relevant information within a couple of seconds, most surfers will click away and try someplace else. In those few seconds, as the engine crawls through millions of links, many problems need to be solved—the biggest of which is called "the verbal-disagreement problem." Verbal disagreement means that if you have a certain concept in mind and you ask two people to describe it, they will give you two completely different, but entirely correct, words. Conversely, two people using the same word could be talking about entirely different concepts. The Internet magnifies that problem immensely. If you search for the word "automobile" on the Web, for instance, you are likely to miss many pages that use the word "car" instead. "Search engines are far better than even five years ago," Motwani told me. "But most of them are still like primitive buzz saws cutting down giant forests to look for a single tree. If you ask me if they are delivering the way I think they should, I would say we are at Step One in a ten-step process."

Internet search has evolved rapidly since 1993, when a program called WebCrawler became the first widely used search engine. These days, there are about two dozen major search engines, most of which rank Web sites based on their contents. Yahoo!, which is probably the most popular, isn't really a search engine at all. It employs a team of editors to index the Internet; if you want a page to show up in a Yahoo! search, you must submit a form with information about the site.

Some people will do almost anything to receive a top ranking from a heavily used search engine, and it's easy to understand why: the first response in a search will bring more viewers, more business—and the sort of prominence that gets a site ranked more highly by other search engines. The ploys people use to get there are often deceptive. Pages can repeat words many times in invisible type (masked in a color that is the same as the color of the page) so that the search engine picks them up and ranks them as more relevant than it otherwise would. For example, some automobile Web sites have stooped to writing "BUY THIS CAR" dozens of times in hidden fonts. That way, a search engine will count the words "buy" and "car" and rate it highly—a subliminal version of listing AAAA Autos in the Yellow Pages.

The most direct way to get your Web site to the top of a search—and the most pernicious—is to pay for it. At GoTo, a popular search engine, payment is routine. As the Internet newsletter *Search Engine Watch* has pointed out, "A company might bid on the word 'travel,' agreeing to pay twenty-five cents per click. If no one agrees to pay more than this, then your company would occupy the top spot—and every time someone clicked on your link, you'd owe GoTo twenty-five cents." That's your "cost per click," and for a much frequented travel site it's a bargain. (At other engines, you can pay for how many times somebody sees your ad, rather than just for clicks.)

As a result, if you type "Harvard" into GoTo, you won't get to the Harvard University home page until you have seen links for Gradschools.com and Harvard Hotels, among others. The people who run search engines say you need to deliver the goods within the first ten entries, but at GoTo the Harvard home page is No. 14. At Infoseek and Google, neither of which takes money for placement, the Harvard home page comes up first.

Motwani knew that for a search to be more effective it would have to move beyond lists and pay for placement. "The Web is a network of hyperlinks, and this network is sometimes called a graph," he said. "If someone goes to the effort of introducing a hyperlink into a Web page, you ought to be able to make judgments about it."

What Motwani and several other researchers recognized was that one could look at surfing around the Web as similar to taking a random walk on a giant

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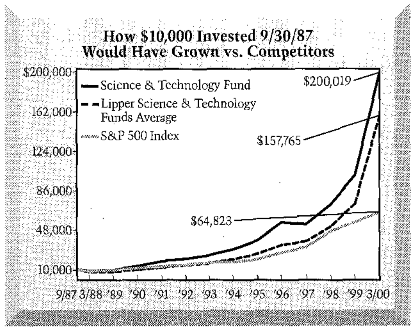

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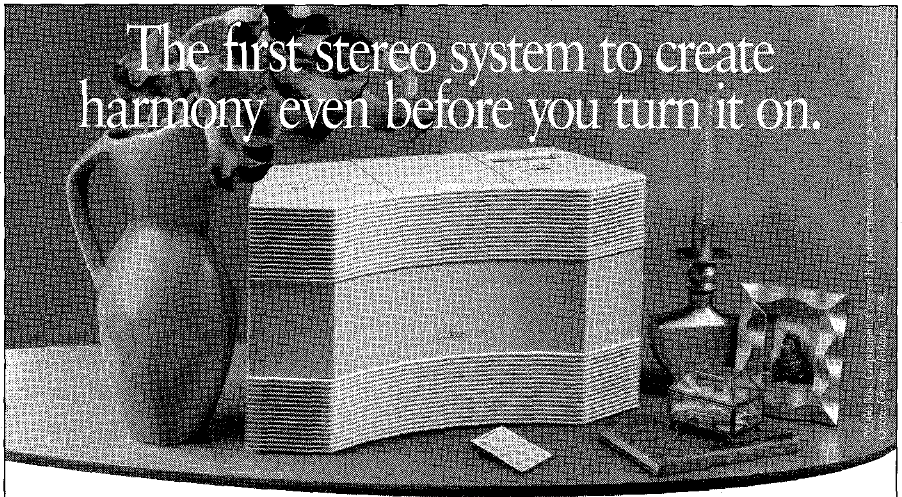
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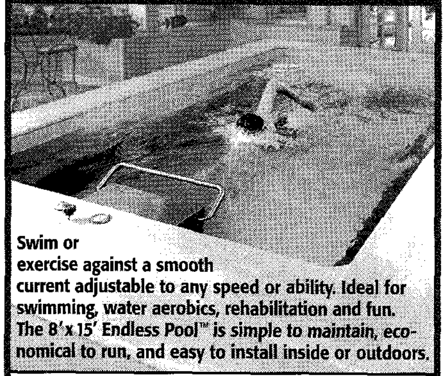

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grid, sort of like wandering aimlessly around Manhattan. If you pick a starting point at random, click on a series of random hyperlinks, and watch long enough as people surf around, you can make statistical statements about how likely it is that a person will end up at any particular site.

"I understood all this, and so did many other people," Motwani said, smiling sheepishly. "But I didn't see the implications." Lawrence Page and Sergey Brin did. "They had this idea, a new way to look at the links on the Web. Other people had thought about link structure, of course. But they took it further. All of a sudden, we were no longer talking about Web pages. We were talking about a giant community, and each link was a relationship between members of that community."

The system, which Page called PageRank, permitted Brin and Page to improve on the standard practice of counting how often a key word appears on a Web site. They realized that if a page is linked to many other pages it's like a vote—the collective voice of the Web has decided that the page has a certain value. If millions of people link to a page, it's a good endorsement. It doesn't mean that the link is accurate, but it's likely to be a more useful authority than a page nobody points to. Page and Brin realized that it was possible to map the Web and rate pages primarily by analyzing links instead of words. (In fact, they are so confident of Google's accuracy that they put an "I'm Feeling Lucky" button on their page. Click on it, and you go directly to the highest-ranked site for your search.)

Such searches can require millions of computations, but essentially the rating you get is based on who "voted" for you by establishing links to your site. (The engine also looks at how many votes were cast for the pages that were linked to those pages. If the home page of the *Times* links to your page, you will be ranked more highly than if, say, just your cousin Harvey links to your home page. That's because many other pages link to the *Times*, so it brings in lots of votes.) "Before this, people were just looking at the content," Motwani told me. "They were completely ignoring the fact that people were going to the effort of putting a link from one page to another and that there must be a meaning to that."

Google is not the first search engine to look at the links on the page; Excite and Lycos have also done it. But Page and Brin's Google has raised the bar. "Their system just works much better than anybody else's does," Danny Sullivan, the editor of *Search Engine Watch*, told me. "Now every major search engine will have to use it. Nobody can afford to do anything less."

I tried it out. I typed "population of Rome" into Google. The program did a quick calculation of the value of all the pages with those words on it, assessed the links that connected them, and figured out the relative value of each page on which the words appeared. It then looked at the position of the words on the page, the size of the fonts, and the likelihood that the words were related to each other. That took 0.38 seconds. By then, I had a list of eighty-four thousand possible responses. It wasn't a perfect search; Google had no way of knowing whether I meant ancient or modern Rome. Unlike any other search engine I tried, however, Google did address my query about the population of Rome, Italy. (My first ten responses in Yahoo!, on the other hand, included two entries for Rome, Maine, and one for Rome, New York. The first mention of the Rome I had in mind was on a page entitled "Xiphoid's Rise of Rome Conplurium." AltaVista wasn't much better. It had nothing of direct value in its first ten responses, one of which was the home page of a Baltimore real-estate agent whose last name is Rome.)

Google can be fooled, of course. Anybody who takes the trouble to set up a group of pages with links to each other can force his way into the rankings, with some rather odd results. Brin told me to type in the phrase "more evil than Satan itself," and the first response was the Microsoft home page. (The response just shows that there are many people on the Web who seem to use the words "evil" and "Satan" when referring to Micro-

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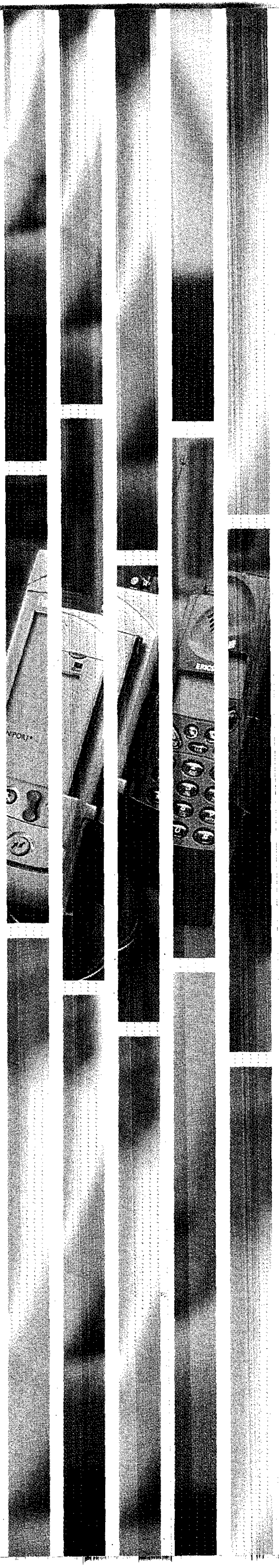

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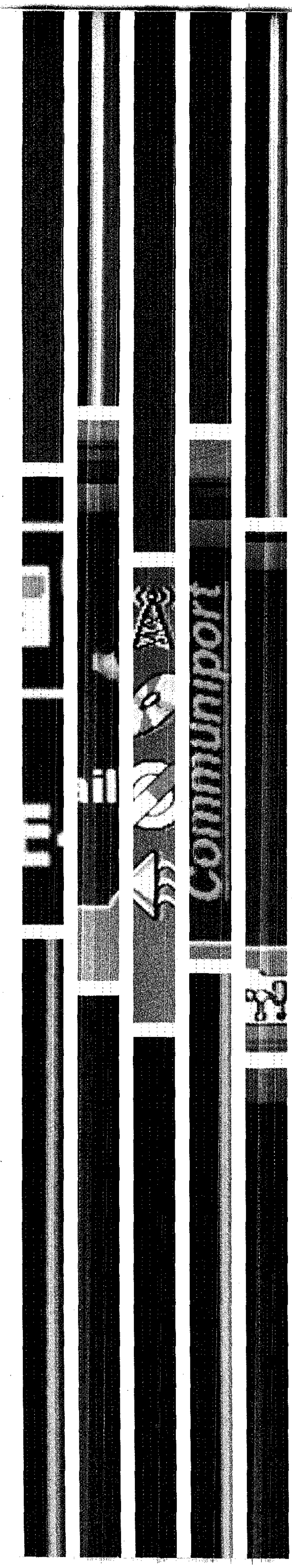

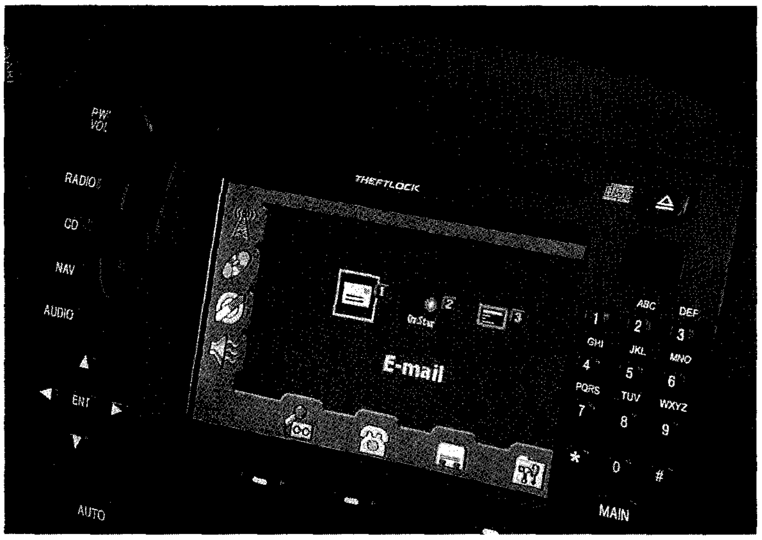

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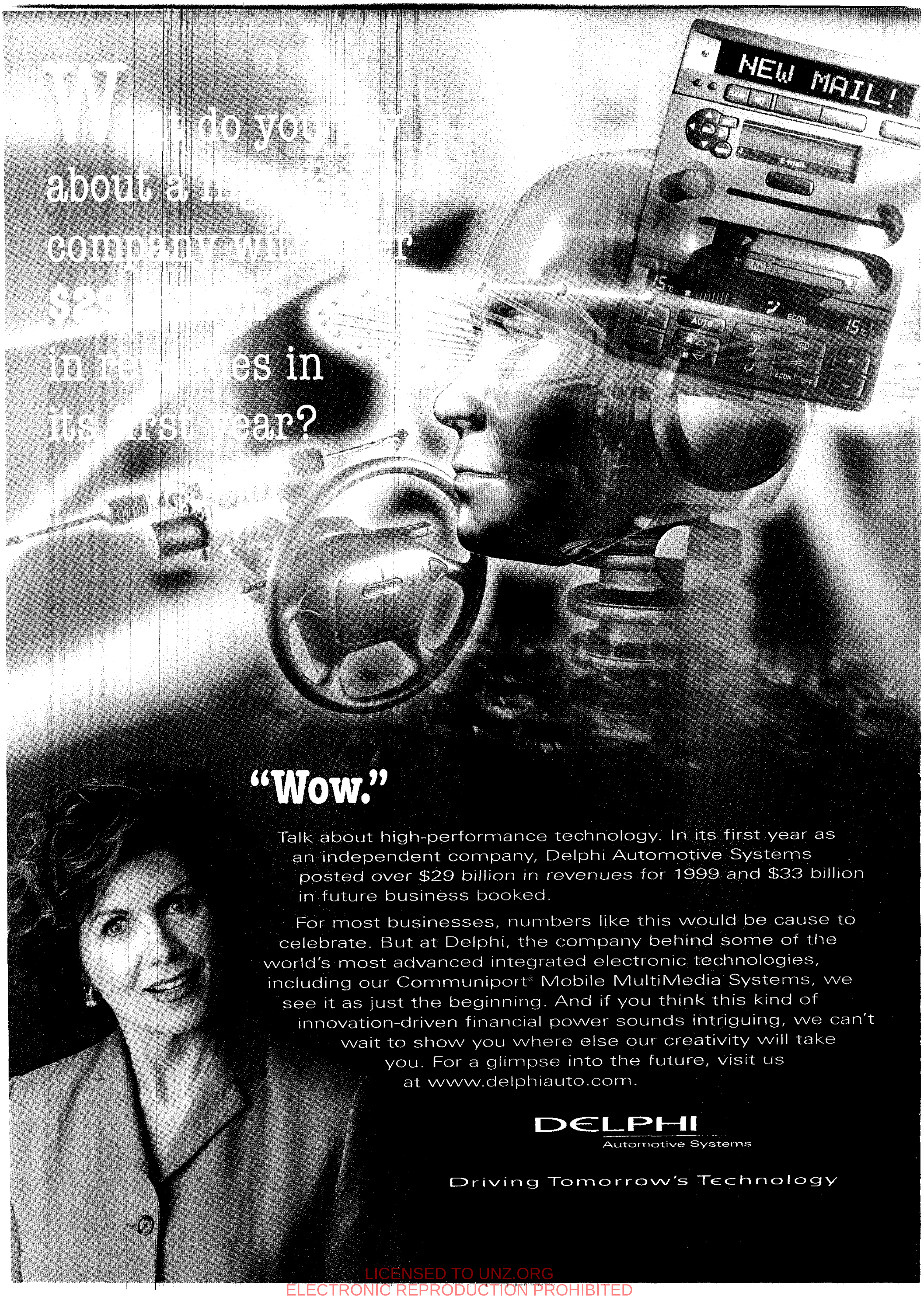

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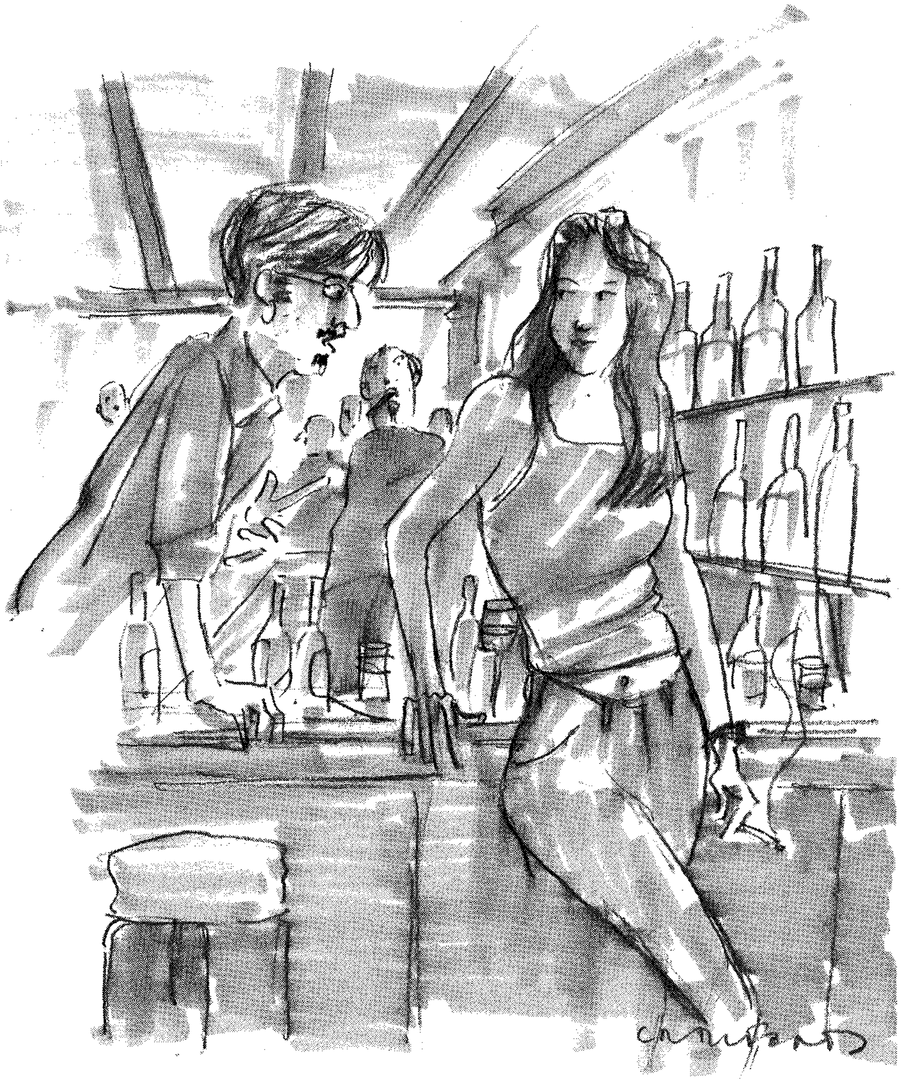


"Whose level do you want to stoop to tonight, mine or yours?"

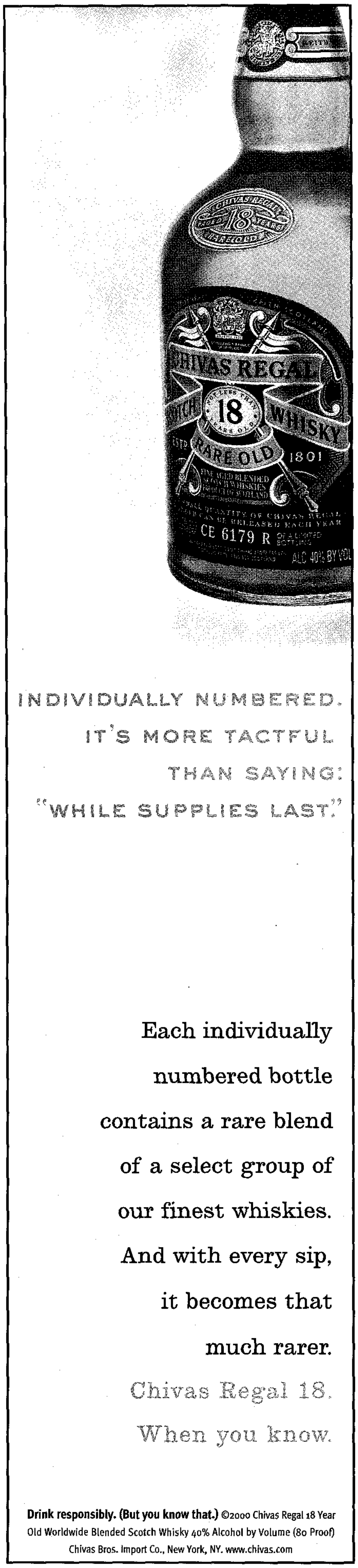
• •

soft—and that they tend to link to each other.) "It's not a trick," Brin said one evening. "But if you want to just say it's possible to get bad information on Google, I'll understand. It's possible to get bad information anywhere."

Google's offices are spread through a sort of dot-com strip mall not far from Palo Alto. It's a graduate-student Disneyland, filled with Rollerblades and assorted hockey paraphernalia for twice-weekly company hockey games. The offices are stocked with enough free M&M's, PowerBars, barrels of granola, urns of coffee, and coolers of fruit juice to drive anybody through to 4 A.M.—which is not an unusual time to find people in the office. Not everything is in place yet, though. When I visited, a baby-grand piano and a new espresso bar were both on order, so the lobby looked a little bare.

A gym is on the lower floor, next to a sauna and a room for massages. There is a massage therapist on site every day—and all employees are encouraged to make use of her services. The biggest perk, however, is the cafeteria. Page and Brin have hired an accomplished chef—he formerly worked for the Grateful Dead—to cook organic meals. The food is free, and all employees are fed lunch and dinner (and so are friends and family members who wish to join them, as long as the chef is given advance notice).

I had lunch one day with a few of the company's researchers, including Jim Reese, who told me that he was employee No. 19. His business card de-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scribes him as chief operations engineer and head neurosurgeon. That's because, before coming to Google, he was a neurosurgeon, at Stanford. Reese spends a lot of his time at Google's "server farms," warehouses filled with computers that have the fastest connections to the Internet. One of Google's facilities is run by a company called Exodus, in nearby Santa Clara, and Google stores some of its network of nearly four thousand Linux computers there, each with eighty gigabytes of hard-drive space, on which it keeps constant downloads of the Web. (Many other companies, including Hotmail and eBay, use Exodus as their electronic storage vault.)

Reese told me that he has been too busy lately to bother with newspapers or television. He gets his news by watching the questions people ask Google in search queries. "Usually, the most popular queries are sex and MP3," he said. "One day it will be sex, the next MP3. But you can sort of gauge important events by looking at the queries. The day after the Grammys, for instance, we were getting tons of hits that involved the words 'Jennifer Lopez' and 'dress' and 'naked.' " I asked him if there were many requests for information with the words 'Gore' or 'Bush' or 'campaign' in them. "Nope," he said, and laughed. "It's a sad comment to make, but nobody seems interested."

About ten per cent of Google queries are for pornography. The figure is lower than that of most other search engines. This reflects the demographics of the people who use the search engine, but perhaps it also demonstrates one of Google's obvious failings: porn sites are sought out by millions of Internet users but are rarely linked to prominent Web pages. Without links, even the most popular page is invisible.

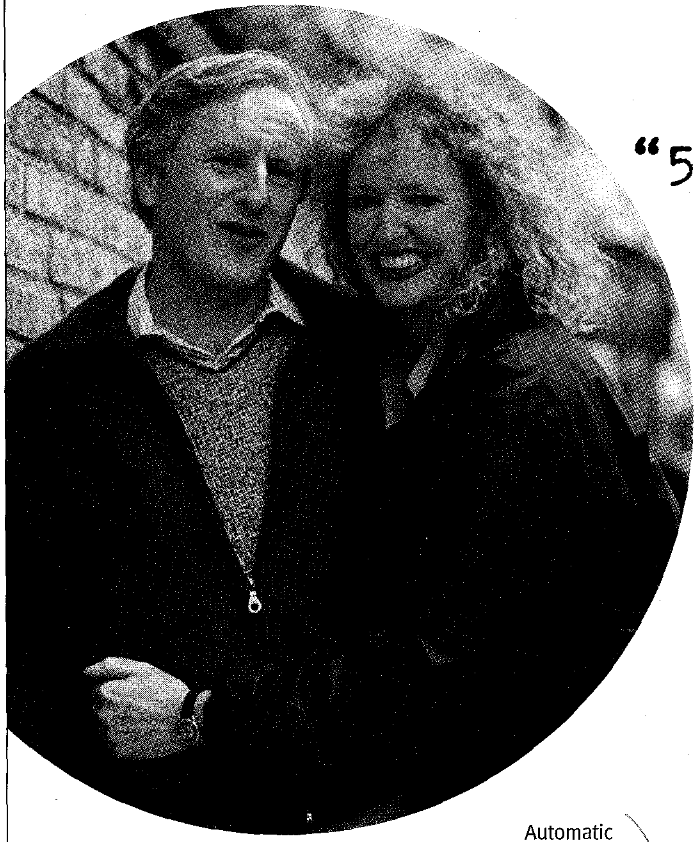
If you add up the ages of Google's founders, it comes to fifty-three—younger than the average age of a C.E.O. of a major company that doesn't have "dot" or "com" in its name. Page and Brin are pleasantly dishevelled workaholics who find it amazing that they don't have to subsist on burritos. The company has not yet gone public; Brin and Page each take eighty thousand dollars a year in salary, which, as Brin pointed out, is more than eighty times what he was making while he was in graduate school.

Brin's family came to America from Russia when he was six. His father teaches math at the University of Maryland, and his mother works at the Goddard Space Flight Center at NASA. Page's father, who died a few years ago, was a computer-science professor at Michigan State. Page was one of those kids who spend their youth taking everything in the house apart. When he and Brin met, at Stanford, they had complementary interests in computers. "I was working on the link structure of the Web," Page said. "A sort of mathematical problem about which pages pointed to which other pages. That's all I was doing. Sergey was working on data mining. He was looking at how useful information could be extracted from large quantities of information."

It didn't take long for them to attract backers. Stanford has put money into Google, as have the venture-capital firms Sequoia Capital and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers. The Sun Microsystems co-founder Andy Bechtolsheim is an investor, too. Still, one of Google's draws is also its biggest liability: all it does is search. There usually isn't much money in that, which is why so many search engines—like AltaVista, Infoseek, Excite, HotBot, and, above all, Yahoo!—have become Web portals where you are encouraged to chat with friends, use E-mail, and look at news wires or stock prices.

Page plans to sell his service to portals like Yahoo! and Microsoft, which would pay Google a fee based on how many of their searches Google manages to complete. It already has an arrangement with such partners as Netscape and the Washington *Post.* Advertising has increased sharply this year—largely because users have, too. So far, Google permits ads to appear only in text form, since text loads faster than graphics, and the company allows no more than two to appear on any page. "We want to be the fastest search engine," Brin told me. "The fastest and the best."

There seems to be a generation of people for whom the Internet is the principal source of information about the world. When they need to solve a problem or answer a question, they go to the Web, and that is where they find



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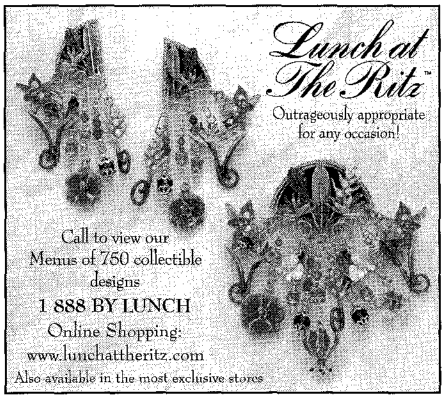
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"reality"—even though the Web often confuses what is "true" with what is "popular." (In "The Economic Analysis of Law," Richard Posner observed, "The true utterance is like the brand of beer that commands ninety-five per cent of the market and the false like the brand with only five per cent.") If you ask most search engines how many home runs Mickey Mantle hit in 1958, you will get some answers that are right and some that are wrong; on the Web, where fantasy-baseball sites are at least as popular as Yankee statistics, it is hard to distinguish what is popular from what is true. "That is the greatest challenge," Andrew Tomkins told me. "Making the truth shine through."

Tomkins, who recently received a Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon, is a researcher on the I.B.M. Clever Project, a search engine that so far is used only at the I.B.M. Almaden Research Center, in San Jose, California. Clever is similar in approach to Google—it looks at links and not just at key words—but it may yet produce a more finely tuned way to find information and assess it. Where Google essentially assigns a fixed value to all links, based on how highly other links value them, Clever's rating allows the links to shift in value depending on the search request.

Clever's analysis follows from this sociological observation: the Web contains many pages filled with useful pointers to specific information. Someone interested in fishing can find plenty of pages with titles like "My Fishing Links." In a traditional search engine, you would type "fishing" and get back a considerable amount of useless information. "Eventually, though, you would probably find a valuable page," Tomkins told me. "Call it 'Joe's fishing links.' Joe is not the guy who won the bass master classic, but he is a grad student in some place and he loves to fish. He is enthusiastic and he has the perseverance to keep his page up to date, and he is really versed in the on-line fishing community. So he created this page with a bunch of links. About fishing. So it's a familiar experience to find a page filled with these useful links. And when you see it you say, 'Ah, finally,' and maybe you bookmark it. This we call a 'hub page.'

"Just through the evolution of the Web, these pages are all over the place," Tomkins continued. "And they are there on every conceivable topic. We found really good hubs on oil spills off the coast of Japan. And on Australian fire brigades—and on people who go off into the woods on the weekend and wear inflatable sumo costumes and wrestle. Clever tests each link, analyzes the text on the pages, and looks for key words."

Then, unlike Google, it analyzes the hubs to discover "authorities"—pages that on-line fishing experts regard as the most useful and interesting—and uses the authorities to help judge the quality of the hubs. Emerging from all that is what Tomkins describes as "the footprint of a community," and he goes on, "The surprising thing is that as the number of pages grows—the billions, zillions, trillions—the number of these communities that emerge from random association shrinks. I decide that it's really important to me to find out wherever fish turn up in stained-glass windows. I find a picture of some stained-glass windows and create a Web page. This is my page with the links to stained-glass windows on it. Nobody cares. Then in Siberia there is some guy who happens to have the same interest, and he creates a page that also links to that stuff. And some other similar stuff. And as soon as that happens we find it. Because I link to these pages. And he links to these pages as well. Even though neither of us knows there is a community on this topic, we can find it and use it in any way we want. This is a way to understand the emergence of low-level grassroots sort of things. We can see patterns as they are developing, trends, ideas, communities. That really could be powerful. It could be beyond search. It could give people what they are looking for."

Over at Google, Page and Brin also wonder whether Clever will be what people are looking for. "It's a good approach," Page told me. The two systems "were conceived in similar ways. But Clever uses additional information that is very prone to manipulation—or spam—by people trying to mislead the search engine for commercial gain." Page went on, "The great thing about search is that we are not going to solve it any time soon. There are so many problems and failings. I see no end to what we need to do. If we aren't a lot better next year, we will already be forgotten." ♦

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George Gilder with one of his daughters at his family farm in Tyringham, Massachusetts. In Gilder's writings, the appeal of technology

is ultimately spiritual.

PROFILES

THE GILDER EFFECT

He's not your ordinary techno-prophet.

BY LARISSA MACFARQUHAR

To say that George Gilder is an optimist is to realize what a dowdy, cautious word "optimist" is. An optimist anticipates the better outcome; Gilder believes that each new day the world will bring forth boons so unexpected and wonderful that they couldn't be imagined the day before. He believes that now is incomparably the best time to be living on earth, and that in the future things will get even better. Ronald Reagan's first budget director, David Stockman, said of Reagan that if he walked into a room filled with shit he would look for a pony. Gilder is an optimist like that. It is no accident that Gilder—scourge of feminists, unrepentant supply-sider, and now, at sixty, a technology prophet—was the living author Reagan most often quoted.

On a cosmic level, Gilder is an optimist because he has faith in God, but in terrestrial matters he is optimistic because he believes that it is impossible to predict the future based on the past. "Any time in human history that people have projected existing trends, they have predicted catastrophe," he says. "If you imagine that the only resources you will ever have are the resources you have now, then inevitably you will predict their exhaustion. Malthus did it. Ricardo did it. In the nineteen-seventies, an international group of scientists, gathered under the auspices of the Club of Rome, declared that within a century there would be famine everywhere, energy resources exhausted, pollution risen to impossibly toxic levels, and, I believe, a new Ice Age on the way. What the doomsayers don't understand is that the reason humans prevail is creativity, and creativity always comes as a surprise."

Gilder's faith in providence is reflected in his personal life. He is famously a mess. He has often shown up for business meetings in socks of different colors, or wearing sneakers with a suit because he neglected to pack shoes. Tales of Gilder's absent-mindedness are legion. There was the time he was having lunch with Mrs. Rockefeller and, his interest piqued by a remark on china patterns, he turned his soup bowl over to investigate its provenance, not noticing that the bowl was full. Gilder's practical disabilities seem to stem from a faith that the world is his friend, and if there comes a time when he really needs socks, somehow the world will supply them.

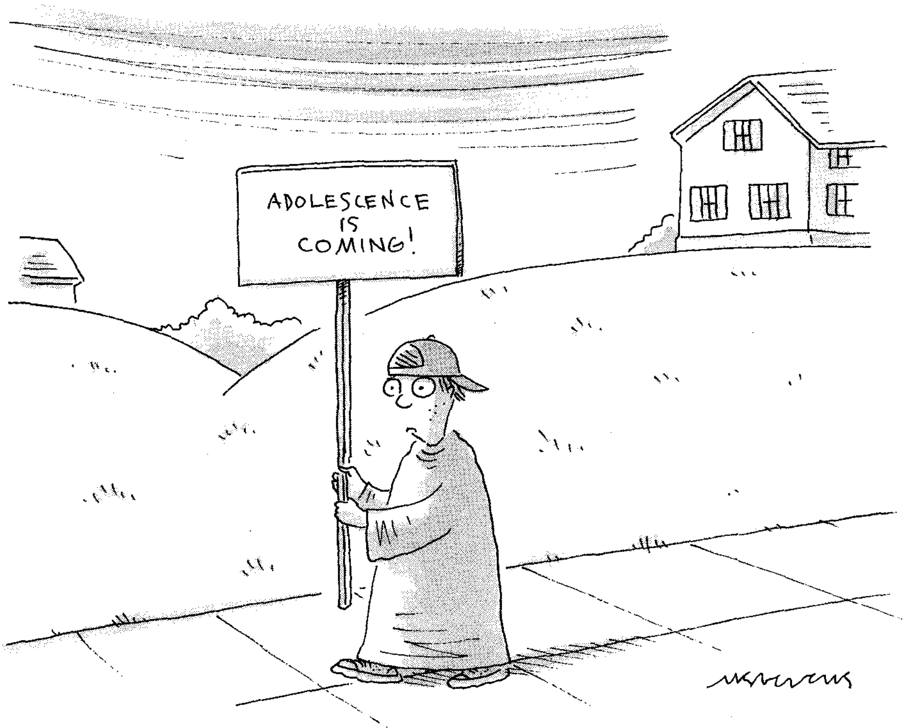
Fortunately for Gilder, he has lived through three moments during which optimism of his ecstatic variety has been rewarded: the Kennedy moment, the Reagan moment, and now the Internet moment. He flubbed the first one. Even though he admired Kennedy, he felt obliged, as a Republican, to balance his contempt for Goldwater with a skeptical attitude toward Democrats. He did his best to engage the spirit of the times; for instance, he tried (and failed) to organize a Republican Freedom Bus. The second moment he caught perfectly: in 1981, he published a book, "Wealth and Poverty," that exalted capitalism as the fulfillment of the Christian mission on earth. The book was enormously influential in igniting the supply-side passions of the early eighties; it was a favorite of Reagan's and became a best-seller around the world, making Gilder rich for the first time in his life. But it is the third moment, the Internet moment—one that Gilder has been waiting for, longing for, praying for, ever since the late seventies, when he fell in love with the semiconductor industry—in which he has most spectacularly come into his own.

In the past year or so, the market in high-technology stocks has found itself periodically swayed by a phenome-

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARTIN SCHOELLER

non known as the "Gilder effect." Each month, Gilder publishes a newsletter, the *Gilder Technology Report*, in which he elaborates on what he calls his paradigm: his vision of the future of technology, in terms both sweeping (bandwidth will become virtually free) and specific (CDMA phone systems like Qualcomm's will displace TDMA systems like those of A. T. & T. Wireless). On the last page of his report, Gilder publishes a list of the thirty-odd companies whose products exemplify his paradigm. The list isn't supposed to be a list of investment bargains—Gilder has no interest in a company's financial history, and he doesn't analyze how well a stock is currently valued—but it has been taken as such by many of his readers. Once a month, at the appointed hour, these readers—who pay two hundred and ninety-five dollars a year for a subscription—rush on-line, scan his report for any new company, and then hurry to buy that company's stock. Since there are now approximately sixty-five thousand subscribers, this produces quite a startling effect. In last month's report, for instance, Gilder added Avanex, a fibre-optical-components company, to his list. His report came out on April 24th, when the market in technology stocks was floundering, but, within minutes of the report's publication, Avanex's stock price rose from fifty-five dollars to eighty. By the end of the week, it had passed a hundred and forty. TeraBeam, another company that Gilder recently wrote about, found that its value increased something like fortyfold in the weeks following his recommendation. Paradoxically, the Gilder effect has begun to erode Gilder's reputation as a prophet. Now that many thousands of people buy whatever stock he recommends, his judgments have become self-fulfilling. He no longer predicts markets; he steers them.

But Gilder is not, in the end, so very interested in markets, or E-commerce, or anything that might be described as "content." He is gripped, rather, by the poetics of communications technology itself: by the magical intricacies of its circuits and fibres, and, even more, by the way in which, in its most enchanted, wireless moments, it seems to evade materiality altogether. Gilder was one of the first writers to foresee the potential of the Internet: as early as 1990, in his book "Life After Television," he wrote about "a crystalline web of glass and light," and "telecomputers in every home attached to a global fiber network." Perhaps one of the reasons his writing about technology has found such a wide audience is that, to him, technology's appeal is ultimately spiritual. In his forthcoming book, "Telecosm," Gilder writes, "Futurists falter because they belittle the power of religious paradigms, deeming them either too literal or too fantastic. Yet futures are apprehended only in the prophetic mode of the inspired historian. The ability to communicate—readily, at great distances, in robes of light—is so crucial and coveted that in the Bible it is embodied only in angels."


ADOLESCENCE IS COMING!

The week before he published his April report, Gilder was in San Francisco on business. That morning, he had gone running (he runs nearly every day); in the evening, Merrill Lynch was paying him to give a speech in Orinda—a suburb in Contra Costa County, which, owing to the large number of Silicon Valley executives who live there, is one of the wealthiest counties in North America. Merrill Lynch had rented a movie theatre for the occasion, and Gilder arrived early, as a man was affixing to the marquee the words "Merrill Lynch Presents George Gilder," underneath the title of the movie that was currently showing, "Erin Brockovich." The main street of Orinda has the feel of a nineteen-fifties small town reconstructed for the set of a movie. Across the street from the theatre is a store called Yogurt Bear, and down the street from Yogurt Bear is a little fountain surrounded by flowers. Gilder had an hour to spare, so he decided to walk to a small café around the corner to fortify himself with a prespeech fruit smoothie. He selected a table outside, underneath an umbrella, and sat down, a little out of place in his black suit.

Gilder looks like a character from a nineteenth-century novel about an English village: the boyish church organist, perhaps, or the local priest on a bicycle. He is tall, pale, and spindly. He has blue eyes, thin lips, and a pointy chin. He wears metal-rimmed glasses. All his running has made him so wiry and springy that his limbs appear to be made of some resilient, lightweight wood or metal instead of flesh. Gilder sipped his smoothie and thought about his speech. It was going to be a slightly awkward business, this speech. The audience would expect to hear his newest opinions on companies, but he considered it his duty to his subscribers not to reveal such information to anyone before releasing it to them. All he could think about that afternoon was Avanex—he had spent the previous evening, over dinner in San Francisco, in a long and, for him, at least, impassioned discussion with Avanex's head of research and development—but somehow he was going to have to avoid so much as mentioning the company's name. Gilder is not naturally reticent. At a quarter to seven, he made his way back to the theatre. His knees and elbows and the wing bones of his back poked into the thin fabric of his black suit as he walked, like the metal spokes of an umbrella.

When the audience had settled, Gilder mounted the stage. To his right and to his left, in twin Deco murals painted on the sides of the proscenium, an enormous naked girl was suspended in joyous flight through a starry sky. Compared to the naked girls, Gilder looked even thinner and more umbrellalike than usual. He peered out at the audience through his glasses. He began in a rambling fashion to talk about his paradigm. The computer era—what he calls the "microcosm"—is over, he said. Now we are entering the age of the telecosm: an age of communications and networks. Every age of industrial development is characterized by a particular abundance and a particular scarcity, and those technologies succeed which conserve the scarce resource and waste the abundant one. Before the industrial revolution, land was abundant and power was scarce. Later, power became abundant and land relatively scarce. In the age of the telecosm, bandwidth will become virtually free. Gilder moved his hands up and down a great deal as he spoke, with flattened palms outward, in the manner of one directing airplanes on a runway. His gestures, though, bore no discernible relation to the substance of his sentences, so it appeared that his arms were being controlled by someone backstage who was unable to hear him speak and was forced to rely on guesswork. His voice sounded strained and whiny, as though he were struggling to be heard without a microphone. Gilder is not a natural public speaker. He used to roll his tie up and down, like a window shade, while he spoke, but he has, for the most part, overcome this habit. The real scarcity in the age of the telecosm, Gilder continued, is time: the ultimate impediment to a network's efficiency is the speed of light, which restricts the speed of information flow around the world. The answer is to bring information physically closer, by caching popular Web sites in many international locations so that they no longer have to be sent thousands of miles from their country of origin. This is why companies developing new storage technologies, such as Novell, Sun Microsystems, and Mirror Image, will become increasingly important.

After Gilder finished speaking, many people wanted to ask him questions, but nobody, it seemed, was interested in pursuing the intellectual implications of his paradigm. Nearly every question consisted simply of the name of a company whose market potential the questioner wanted Gilder to evaluate. This is usually the case when Gilder speaks, and it disappoints him, not just because he would much rather get into a discussion about technology than speculate about the stock market; it disappoints him because it demonstrates how widespread what he considers to be a wrongheaded conception of capitalism has become. Capitalism, to Gilder, is not about making money—at least, not in the grasping, individualist sense. It has been a source of great irritation to him over the years that the right has been almost as hard on the capitalist as the left: the two sides may differ on the merits of capitalism as a system, but they tend to agree that the individual capitalist is a figure of, at best, ambiguous morality, driven by greed or, to put it gently, rational self-interest. To Gilder, this is not only offensive but inaccurate. Rational self-interest, he argues, leads to caution, of a sort that might keep an existing enterprise in business but will never generate the kind of radical innovation that leads to new companies and large fortunes. The true entrepreneur has no time to stop and perform calculations. Instead, in love with the beauty of his idea, he rushes imprudently forth, gambling all he has on the chance to create something new. Rationality and prudence are for socialists, who believe that the future may be calculated based on the past; capitalists, who know that the future depends on human acts of creation and is thus incalculable, leap blindly into the unknown.

When "Wealth and Poverty" was first published, Gilder's depiction of the irrational entrepreneur was considered quite eccentric, but in the intervening twenty years it has become conventional wisdom. It is likely that both the extraordinary popular success of the book and the suspicion with which it was initially greeted by many economists were due in part to Gilder's fervent prose. The book is as much sermon as analysis, and its ideology of faith and anti-rationalism allows for a revelatory extravagance that could never accommodate a liberal program of improvement. Gilder is in the business of exhorting ardor for the future more than analyzing the world as it is, and his vocabulary suits this mission. Even his darker warnings are couched in language so grandiose and Biblical that they seem fables rather than admonitions against real possibility. In "Wealth and Poverty," for instance, he writes, "The rates of taxation climb and the levels of capital decline, until the only remaining wealth beyond the reach of the regime is the very protein of human flesh, and that too is finally taxed, bound, and gagged, and brought to the colossal temple of the state—a final sacrifice of carnal revenue to feed the declining élite." In his celebration of the entrepreneurial leap, Gilder can sound like Ayn Rand, but there is an important difference between them: religion. Rand believed in the glory of selfishness; Gilder believes that capitalism properly understood is altruistic and dependent upon faith in God. (Rand was so disgusted by what she took to be Gilder's perverted sentimentality on this point that she devoted the last public speech of her life to denouncing him.) Gilder's explanation for his thesis is that, because an entrepreneur can never be sure of a return on his investment, starting up a business is like offering a gift to the world, in the hope, but never the certainty, that the gift will be reciprocated.

One Monday afternoon, about a month after he returned from San Francisco, Gilder got into his car and drove from his home in the Berkshires to Manhattan. He had several appointments in the city over the next few days before he had to fly to Madison, Wisconsin, to address the state investment board. There was, for instance, a do at the United Nations: an international evening devoted to figuring out how to narrow the gap between rich and poor. Gilder was to be a featured speaker at a table devoted to the impact of E-commerce. He arrived at the U.N. somewhat harried, tie askew, wheeling a suitcase and carrying a tote bag stuffed with papers. He was looking forward to skirmishes. This was, after all, the quintessential bleeding-heart event: he expected to be, as he had been in years past, the most conservative and the most optimistic person present. The dinner was not a situation in which Gilder would have found himself in the normal course of things; he was there because of his connection to its organizer, Peggy Dulany, née Rockefeller, whose father, David Rockefeller, had been a sort of substitute father for Gilder when he was growing up. Among the Rockefeller children of Gilder's generation are some notorious liberals: Peggy is a friend of Castro's; Abby has devoted years to ridding the world of flush toilets, for environmental reasons; Eileen is a proponent of alternative medicine. In this group, Gilder was the only one to turn out conservative—an eccentricity that is tolerated in his adoptive family with varying degrees of resignation. Gilder's real father died at twenty-eight, when Gilder was three, flying an Air Forces plane on the way to serve in the Second World War. Before Richard Gilder went into the Air Forces, he made a deal with Rockefeller, who had been his college roommate, that if he were to die in the war Rockefeller would take care of his son. By dying young, Richard Gilder, as his son puts it, "attained immortality and erected a standard of manhood which would forever prove unattainable." After his father died, his mother married his father's cousin, Gilder Palmer, and the two of them ran a marginally profitable dairy farm in Tyringham, Massachusetts.

Gilder comes from an old—though no longer, in his parents' generation, wealthy—East Coast family. One of his great-grandfathers was Louis Comfort Tiffany, the glassmaker; another was Richard Watson Gilder, the editor of the magazine *Century* and a friend of Grover Cleveland and Walt Whitman. Family legend has it that a handwritten manuscript of "Leaves of Grass" exists somewhere in one of the Gilder farmhouses, misplaced by a forgetful relative. The Gilders were painted by Cecilia Beaux and sculpted by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. A onetime fiancée of Gilder's, the novelist and playwright Jane Stanton Hitchcock, remembers attending a dinner at the house of Gilder's aunt in Washington Square sometime in the seventies, at which conversation turned to the way the war had torn the family apart. She realized only gradually that it was the Civil War they were talking about. But the family is not overly concerned with preserving past grandeur. When Gilder was fifteen and his family's barn, in which they kept cows and antique Tiffany glass, burned to the ground, they saved the cows.

Gilder went to the Hamilton School, Exeter, and Harvard. Hamilton was a progressive school in New York City: its students were taught how to launch protests, they practiced being unionists, and their sex instruction took the form of pretending to be salmon. Gilder was frequently disruptive, and he became known there for stealing books from the library. In all three schools, Gilder was a dreadful student. ("He has become disciplined in a way that one might not have expected when he was young," Rockefeller observes delicately, when asked about Gilder's career.) He was expelled from Harvard after his freshman year for failing courses, and, wanting to do the manliest, toughest thing he could think of, he joined the Marines. After six months, though, he reapplied to Harvard, was taken back, and eventually graduated, in 1962.

Gilder had attended enough Rockefeller dinners at the U.N. to know that if he didn't go on the attack his tablemates would agree with one another, and they'd all fall asleep—especially with an insipid topic like closing the gap between rich and poor. So when it came his turn to introduce himself, he said, "My name is George Gilder, and I'm an advocate of gaps." There was a silence. "Why?" someone asked. Gilder explained that entrepreneurship was the essence of capitalism, and, since some people were more entrepreneurial than others, gaps were inevitable. "So

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EASEL BY EDWARD SOREL

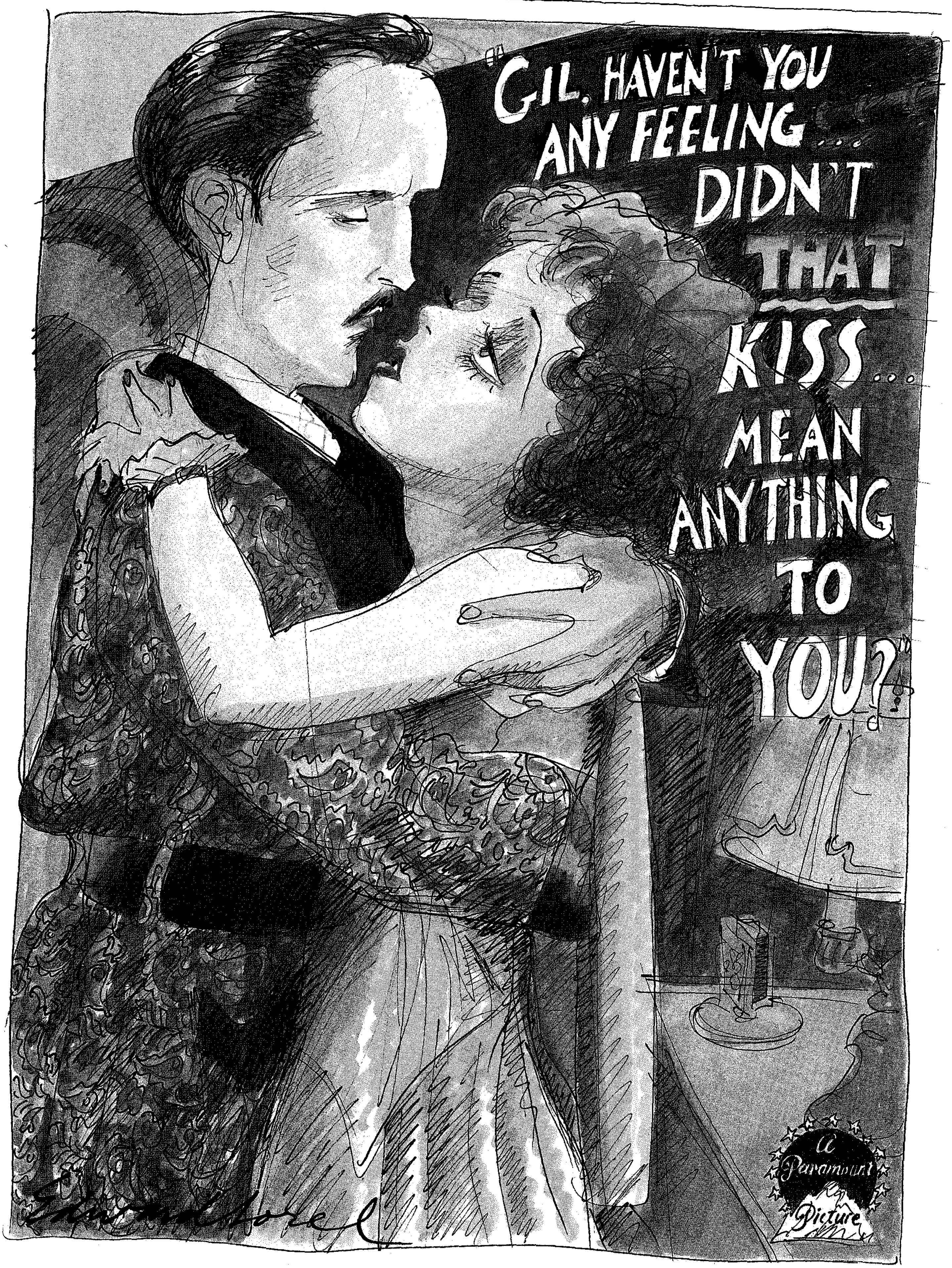
THE "IT" GIRL

The early film star Clara Bow had what Billy Wilder calls "flesh impact." Equally adept at teary melodrama and bedroom farce, she quickly rose from a wretched childhood in the slums of Brooklyn to the top of America's newest popular art. In 1927, when Bow was twenty-one, she starred in a movie about sex appeal called "It," and popularized the idea that the girl next door could be a sexual aggressor. Bow never hid her love affairs or denied her gritty origins, and she drew attacks from Hollywood moralists and social climbers. Studio bosses showed her scant respect, tossing her into one hackneyed project after another. Her career ended in 1933.

Bruce Goldstein, who has programmed a tribute to her which is currently showing at Film Forum, compares Clara Bow to Mickey Mouse: "Everyone knows who Mickey is, though few people have actually seen his movies." With no acknowledged masterpiece among her fifty-seven movies, she sank into neglect. But Bow had a gift for getting rescued. Her white knight in real life was the cowboy star Rex Bell, who married her and removed her to a Nevada ranch. And David Stenn, the author of a 1988 biography, "Clara Bow: Runnin' Wild" (just reissued and expanded), is continuing his crusade to save his film heroine from historical oblivion.

Stenn is a successful television writer, but when he discovered Bow's films at the U.C.L.A. Film Archive, in the mid-eighties, he put aside his TV work and devoted himself to her biography. He has needled studios and film libraries into preserving Bow's repertoire, and he underwrote the restoration of the 1925 silent "Parisian Love" and the 1929 talkie "The Saturday Night Kid" himself. "I know biographers who jump from one subject to the next," Stenn says. "But I mate for life."

—*Michael Sragow*


"GIL, HAVEN'T YOU ANY FEELING.... DIDN'T THAT KISS.... MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?"
A Paramount Picture

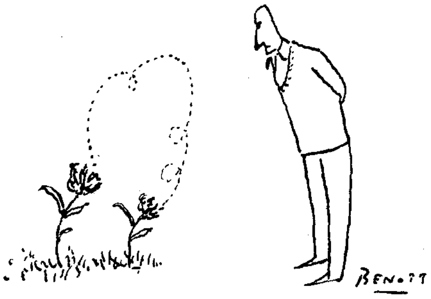
will the rich get richer and the poor poorer?" asked a concerned person at the table, who worked at a hedge fund. "No," Gilder told him impatiently. "There will be more and more rich people."

That evening, Gilder had been set up against Robert Hormats—the vice-chairman of Goldman Sachs International, who served as Deputy U.S. Trade Representative under Jimmy Carter and Assistant Secretary of State under Reagan. Gilder considered Hormats, whom he'd met a few times before, smart but hopelessly lefty, and was looking forward to sparring with him. Politics was not the only difference between them. Hormats is the sort of man who radiates success, good health, and contentment. He is the same age as Gilder but looks fifteen years younger; he is blond and broad-chested, and carries himself with an air of unimpeachable geniality, as though it had been his experience in life that people either agreed with him right away or rapidly succumbed, without animus, to his charisma and capacious intelligence. Gilder, on the other hand, darts into an argument with the aggressive glee of an underdog who sets out to shock, and feels he has failed if no one is offended. Although he is often treated as a guru, Gilder does not have a guru personality. It is not in his nature to cultivate an aura of gravitas and infallibility; instead, he dances twitchily about, fists flailing, glancing warily around him, clinging to his own anxiety as a sign that he is vital—that he has not yet surrendered to smug venerability. This sense of constructive malaise is a character trait, but it is also, for Gilder, a long-standing moral commitment. One of his favorite books in college, José Ortega y Gasset's "The Revolt of the Masses," an exaltation of spiritual aristocracy, warns against the dangers of contentment. Ortega writes, "There are centuries which die of self-satisfaction through not knowing how to renew their desires, just as the happy drone dies after the nuptial flight."

As the evening proceeded, however, Gilder discovered, to his dismay, that he and Hormats agreed on most issues. Afterward, in an effort to explain this puzzling development, he mused that the Internet had tended to bring liberals and conservatives together: the freewheeling pluralism of Internet culture had inclined many liberals against government regulation, and because E-commerce seemed to lower the barriers to entry in many businesses it tended to make both liberals and conservatives more sanguine about the long-term prospects of the free market. "The heat of the herd," Gilder fretted to himself. He tends to feel that if people agree with him it is a sign that he is failing to think far enough ahead. Perhaps it was time to move on.

Gilder was not always so conservative. As a young man—in college, and for the first few years after graduation—he thought of himself as a progressive Republican, on the basis of his scorn for Goldwater and the John Birch Society and his support for the civil-rights movement. He worked at *The New Leader*, a magazine known primarily as an organ of the anti-Communist left. He cultivated a liberal aesthetic in his life style. He moved to New York and lived in the East Village, on Twelfth Street. He slept during the day, and in the evening he walked over to Slugs, a jazz club on East Third Street that was open almost all night. At Slugs, he would listen to Pharoah Sanders and Sun Ra and write love letters to Joan Didion, whom he knew slightly, through her boyfriend. When he wasn't writing letters to Joan Didion at Slugs, though, he was writing speeches for Nixon. (Later, he wrote speeches for Senator Bob Dole as well, though his relationship with Dole was rocky: once, his college roommate, Bruce Chapman, recalls, Dole took a speech of Gilder's, scattered it around the floor of his hotel room, and, pointing to the pages one by one, reproached Gilder—"Bad! Bad! Bad!"—as if he were a dog who had made a mess indoors.)

Gilder's sixties aesthetic lingers in his writing style, with its Beat-inflected run-on sentences. Pondering his twenty-seven-year-old self in a mordant E-mail, Gilder writes, "I am disgusted. This is a typical 20th century blade, a secular, liberal, priapic, poseur poetic, guilt ridden Wasp, infatuated with blacks in jazz and 'soul' and blues, sweating to suck up their swashbuckling manhood, sure that the world's greatest writers were Norman Mailer and Joan Didion and Robert Lowell (it would take him about a decade of heavy lifting to figure out that contemporary poetry is junk and most of his writer heroes nihilist fools or Marxoid fantasists), quite admiring of Castro and Ho Chi Minh as agrarian patriots, beating a bed in a weekly stint of Wilhelm Reichian Orgone therapy at a shrink's on East End Avenue, and disdainful of businessmen and technologists who were deemed to lack 'soul.' In general, a typical intellectual parasite on the noble body of Capitalism." Eventually, though, he moved to the right. He got to know William F. Buckley, Jr., who, some years before, had founded *National Review*. The publication of the Moynihan report on the black family, in 1965, spurred him into a lifelong campaign against welfare, and Theodore Draper's denunciations of Castro for *The New Leader* extinguished what sparks of leftist sentimentality he had once possessed. Back then, Gilder was obsessed with women. He picked up women everywhere: by the side of the road in the Berkshires, in hotel bars, on Greyhound buses, in diners, in museums and movie theatres, in the park. "He 'loved' them all, so he said," Gilder continues in the E-mail, "but he was in general, with women, as the best ones often detected, a jerk and a creep." He asked at least three women to marry him before one said yes.



Despite his relentless pursuits, Gilder never really attracted the sort of female attention he craved until the early seventies, when he discovered his vocation as an anti-feminist. In those days, he was living in Cambridge, editing the *Ripon Forum*, a magazine put out by the progressive-Republican Ripon Society, when he wrote and published a defense of Nixon's veto of the Mondale-Javits day-care bill, on the ground that, now that welfare had driven away inner-city fathers by rendering them superfluous, day care would deprive poor children of their mothers as well. The female members of the Ripon Society were outraged, and he was fired from his position almost immediately. It was Gilder's first taste of controversy, and he discovered that he liked it. It was fun being the object of attack. After one debate, on PBS, he remembers that "what seemed like hundreds" of women rushed forward onto the stage to argue with him. Since he had spent most of his youth looking for ways to arouse female passion, he reckoned he had found his calling. The aftermath of the day-care brouhaha, though, was not so exciting. Expelled from the Ripon Society, Gilder left Cambridge and moved to New Orleans to work for Ben C. Toledano, a friend of his who had recently decided to run for the Senate. The following few months were, Gilder now feels, the lowest point of his life. "I had no money," he says. "My love life was in a shambles, left behind in Cambridge. At one point, I decided to write 'Sexual Suicide.' I'd work for Ben in the morning, and then I'd write all night long at the Café du Monde, on Jackson Square. I was lonely. I was a little creep down in the library writing my screeds and wandering the streets at night with four dollars and sixty-five cents in my pocket. But I did get through the book."

If the day-care controversy had made him something of a feminist target, "Sexual Suicide" was the book that elevated him, in the eyes of the women's movement, to a veritable Satan. The book now reads like a peculiar relic of the seventies, a kind of political camp, but at the time it caused a tremendous row, and in its wake Gilder was awarded the title of Male Chauvinist Pig of the Year by both *Time* and the National Organization for Women (a title he still refers to with some pride, noting that the previous year's recipient was Norman Mailer). The book argued that, without the taming and ego-bolstering influence of a wife and family to support, men were barbarous savages, liable to dash about raping and pillaging and generally wreaking havoc with their predatory lusts and destructively short-term attention spans. "Men lust, but they know not what for," Gilder wrote, with the lyricism of the damned. "They fight and compete, but they forget the prize; they spread seed, but spurn the seasons of growth; they chase power and glory, but miss the meaning of life." Gilder concluded that heterosexual marriage was the key to civilization, and that homosexuality, welfare (which, by making men financially superfluous to a family, led to emasculation and illegitimacy), and feminism (ditto) were its downfall.

"Good news—a four-letter word for 'earthen pot' is 'olla.'"

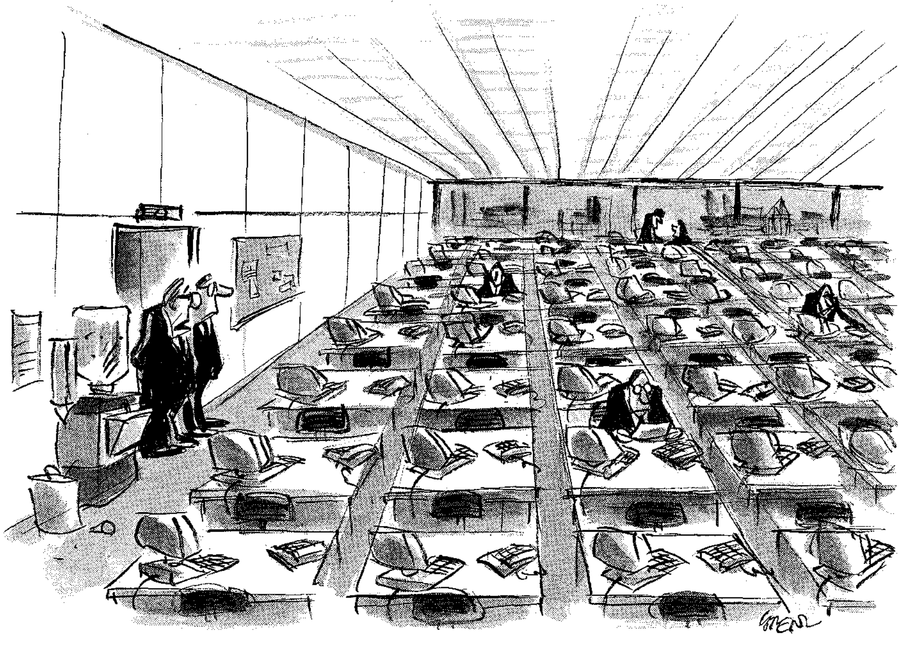
His writings on the women's movement are the closest Gilder gets to pessimism. "Will the scientists and women's liberationists be able to unleash on the world a generation of kinless children to serve as the Red Guards of a totalitarian state?" he demanded in the apocalyptic conclusion of "Sexual Suicide." "Will we try to reproduce the Nazi experiment, when illegitimacy was promoted by the provision of lavish nursing homes and the state usurped the provider male?"

Gilder now lives with his wife, Nini, and their four children, in the red farmhouse he grew up in, in Tyringham (population approximately three hundred and fifty). Nini comes from the nearby town of Lenox, and is, according to Midge Decter, who edited two of Gilder's books, "quality people." Gilder's mother, who is a professional pianist, lives half a mile away, and helps to home-school the Gilder children. (Each child has spent at least one school year at home, in part to inoculate him against noxious secular influences.) Gilder has set up his office in an old mill building in Housatonic, a neighboring village, just a few minutes away from the Norman Rockwell Museum. The setting couldn't be more tranquil: outside Gilder's window, the Housatonic River rushes over rocks; the only audible sounds are splashing water, wind blowing through trees, and someone typing next door. Nonetheless, some time after his return from San Francisco Gilder found himself preoccupied with an accident.

The day before giving his speech in Orinda, he had been driving his rental car somewhere in Oakland and had rammed hard into the Ford Ranger in front of him. Nobody was hurt, but he was startled and disturbed all the same, because he was sure he'd been driving slowly and carefully. He was convinced that the accident was a warning of some kind, but about what? Was he becoming sloppy? Complacent? Giddy with his own success? He couldn't stop thinking about it. Looking backward to change lanes and missing the big thing right in front of his nose that could have left him dead—the incident seemed fraught with meaning. Gilder does not, in any case, believe in accidents. Many years ago, in the mid-seventies, he retreated to a small Caribbean island to write his third book, "Naked Nomads." The book described the plight of the single man: how without a woman to tame him he was more likely to commit suicide, more likely to commit a crime, and more likely to indulge in reckless behavior. One afternoon, taking a break from writing, Gilder stood for a moment at the edge of a small cliff, before climbing down to the beach to sunbathe. Next thing he knew, he had inexplicably pitched forward and fallen face first onto the rocks below. That time, too, he had felt himself in the grip of significance. Lying in the hospital with a broken nose, he remembered that only the day before he had been writing about the fact that single men are six times as likely as married ones to die from "accidental falls." He, Gilder, was a single man, and there he was, falling.

The single man's tendency to get into accidents Gilder attributes to psychology, but in general his sense that even trivial events hold meaning is a religious one. He has become much more religious as he has grown older. He describes himself on his *Technology Report* Web site as "an active churchman." Satan now makes occasional but striking appearances in his work. He talks a lot about entrepreneurial creativity and human freedom, but it is not a radical, existential type of freedom he is referring to; it is, rather, freedom within a world that is already filled with ideas and meaning—put there by God, and waiting to be discovered through a mysterious combination of analytic brilliance and intuition. Gilder is, in fact, sufficiently committed to the idea that divine intelligence permeates all earthly occasions that he has turned away from Darwin and has begun reading writers such as Michael Denton and Michael Behe. Denton and Behe are not creationists as that term is usually understood—they don't reject the idea of evolution per se; they don't believe the world was created all at once, six thousand years ago—but they reject the idea that evolution is a purely mechanical process with no inherent purpose. They argue that the complex workings of molecular biology and the precise fitness of the cosmos for human life compel the conclusion that the universe—evolution and all—was designed by a benevolent deity for the purpose of producing mankind.

To Gilder's mind, most of what secularism gets wrong about the world can be summed up in the phrase "the Materialist Superstition." By this, he means the idea that the world is composed of physical matter, and whatever else may arise—love, religious feeling—is a product of matter and reducible to it. Included in this mistake, according to Gilder, is any sort of economics that imagines industrial development to have a momentum of its own apart from the genius of individual entrepreneurs; any psychology that conceives of consciousness as a side product of the brain; and, of course, any biology that understands evolution as a purely bodily process spurred by carnal need and random mutation. Gilder believes that quantum physics has confirmed his view: to him, the discovery that matter is, at base, composed not of inert, solid particles but of waves, fields, and probabilities means that matter is, at base, intelligence or spirit.



"Maybe zero tolerance is setting the bar too high."

More than anything, Gilder is a romantic. Not only does he despise materialism; he also disdains rationality and calculation. Genius, to him, is to be found in intuitive, irrational leaps; in flashes of insight whose origins cannot be traced; in risks so bold that their outcomes cannot possibly be predicted. Human creativity, he believes, will flourish as long as minds remain open to chance, intuition, and mystery; it will wither when people imagine that they must proceed by empirical and logical means alone. This is why he holds that socialism is the work of the Devil. "The most dire and fatal hubris for any leader is to cut off his people from providence, from the miraculous prodigality of chance, by substituting a closed system of human planning," he wrote in "Wealth and Poverty." But this creed is not just a fancy way of extolling the imagination; Gilder believes, rather, that evading reason allows a person to glimpse mysteries whose existence he otherwise would never suspect. "The mind has access to a higher consciousness, sometimes anomalously, after Jung, called a *collective unconscious*, sometimes defined as God," he wrote, in the same chapter. "As a person's mind merges with the living consciousness that is the ulterior stuff of the cosmos, he reaches new truths, glimpses the new ideas—the projections of light into the unknown future—by which intellectual progress occurs." This is no mere supposition on Gilder's part: he believes he has experienced that living consciousness directly, through ESP.

Back in the early seventies, when Gilder was working in Cambridge, he came home late one night to the house he shared in Watertown with a group of friends to find that a man with long black hair and "a demonic gleam in his eye" named Billy Delmore had turned up for a visit. Delmore was sitting by himself in the living room, performing what appeared to be magic tricks: finding a particular card in a pack and retrieving objects in the apartment that had been lost. Delmore told Gilder that he, too, could do this, and Gilder found that he could—almost immediately. For about six months, he became preoccupied with ESP, pondering what it was that made it work. It wasn't telepathy, since he wasn't reading anyone's mind: rather, he appeared to be gaining access to knowledge that nobody had, such as where the ace of spades could be found in a newly shuffled pack of cards. It was then that Gilder began to suspect that some sort of knowledge existed outside normal human consciousness—indeed, outside humans altogether—that was attainable if one could temporarily disable the everyday faculties of reason and sensory perception which prevented one from apprehending it. He hypothesized that the type of insight required to gain access to this knowledge was a vestigial faculty from a time in human history before language emerged—usable still if you knew how to make it work.

Before he left New York, Gilder decided to drop in on a group of his subscribers who were meeting for dinner at the Palm, a restaurant on West Fiftieth Street. Subscribers had recently taken to organizing such events in a number of cities around the country, and Gilder sometimes showed up, though he never promised to in advance, for fear of unmanageable crowds. He was spotted right away as he walked in, and the group burst into applause. He shifted awkwardly through the room, acknowledging the clapping on either side of him with quick grins, looking about for a place to sit. Although surrounded by some of his most loyal followers that night, Gilder was a little nervous. The fact was that in the past few weeks many of his subscribers had lost a lot of money. In the case of a number of his recommendations (Northeast Optic Network, Novell, Motorola), the Gilder effect had evaporated almost immediately. Some angry investors had called him a "pump-and-dump artist"; others had threatened to call the S.E.C. And then there had been the Mirror Image fiasco.

A couple of months before, at a conference in Scottsdale, Arizona, Gilder had met a Norwegian named Alexander Vik. Vik was the chairman of a company called Mirror Image, and in the course of a conversation Gilder realized, to his great excitement, that Mirror Image fit his new information-caching paradigm perfectly. Even though he knew very little about the company, he took a risk and, mostly on the basis of that conversation with Vik, in his February letter he wrote a glowing report. The effect was immediate. Not only did Gilder's subscribers, as usual, rush to buy his recommendation, but so many others did as well that, in the next four or five days, the market capitalization of Xcelera, the parent of Mirror Image, increased by at least three billion dollars. Then disaster struck. The Washington *Post* and the New York *Observer* both published scathing stories about Mirror Image. Vik was interviewed on CNBC and came off as louche and arrogant; when asked about his failure to file quarterly financial reports, he breezily informed the interviewer that, since his company was headquartered in the Cayman Islands, he didn't have to. Rumors started circulating to the effect that Vik and his partners had sold most of their shares and were getting ready to jump.

It was scary. For a couple of weeks, Gilder thought he might have been taken for a ride, and he braced himself for a dramatic humiliation. Thankfully, he was saved. Ellen Hancock, who is the C.E.O. of Exodus Communications, the world's leading Web-hosting company, read Gilder's letter and sent her technical people to evaluate the company. On the basis of their recommendation, she decided to invest six hundred and thirty-eight million dollars in Mirror Image's technology. Gilder, with enormous relief, perceived that he had been vindicated—intellectually, if not financially. (Mirror Image's stock remained much lower than its Gilder-effect peak.) Still, he was shaken. He had always believed that taking risks in the absence of good information was what capitalism was all about, and if he wasn't willing to go out on a limb for technologies he believed in who would? But the affair had made him wonder whether, now that he had such an influence on the allocation of capital, he could still responsibly hold to his report's operating assumption that ideas were all that mattered.

The dinner went better than Gilder had hoped. The subscribers could hardly have been more effusive in their expressions of allegiance: one compared him to Copernicus, another to the Holy Grail. One woman, an accountant, told Gilder that she remembered perfectly the day she had first read "Wealth and Poverty," back in 1981: she had begun it in the morning, read it on the train to work, read it all through the day, and finished it late that night. Gilder, gratified to find someone who had discovered him as a writer first and a stock-picker second, lunged toward the woman across the table in order to shake her hand, but he knocked over a glass and retreated in confusion.

It was close to twelve before the subscribers let Gilder leave the restaurant. He emerged into the humid spring night and hailed a taxi to take him back to his hotel. He was pleased by the way things had turned out. In this group, at least, it seemed to him that he had succeeded not only in spreading the word about optics and wireless but in infecting people with his optimism as well. It was all very encouraging. Maybe it didn't even truly matter if he were to be taken for a ride by someone like Alexander Vik. After all, in the long run, he felt sure, the right technology would prevail, because in the long run good will prevail. Keynes may have talked a few people into believing that in the long run we'll all be dead, but that was typical pessimistic secularism speaking. Gilder bumped along in his taxi toward Central Park South and felt renewed hope for the future. Those few subscribers who had lost faith in his report after short-term losses had never really understood his project anyway, he thought. His eyes were adjusted for distance. ♦

LETTER FROM EUROPE

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, SORORITY

French women demand their share.

BY JANE KRAMER

It looks, at first, as if nothing has changed in Paris, at least where women are concerned. The streets are full of them, and they look good—like Paris women. The shops cater to their presumed desires. Wispy pink garter belts. State-of-the-art salad bowls. Imported tartans for the baby. There is still a *parfumerie* on nearly every block. You hold out a wrist or lift your hair and walk into a cloud of jasmine or tea rose with (this year) "vanilla tones." And if you say "feminism" to the young woman getting sprayed beside you, she will quickly refer you to her mother, and then apologize for her mother, saying that, after all, women were a little hysterical, a little radical, in her mother's day—you couldn't blame them—but that things are normal now.

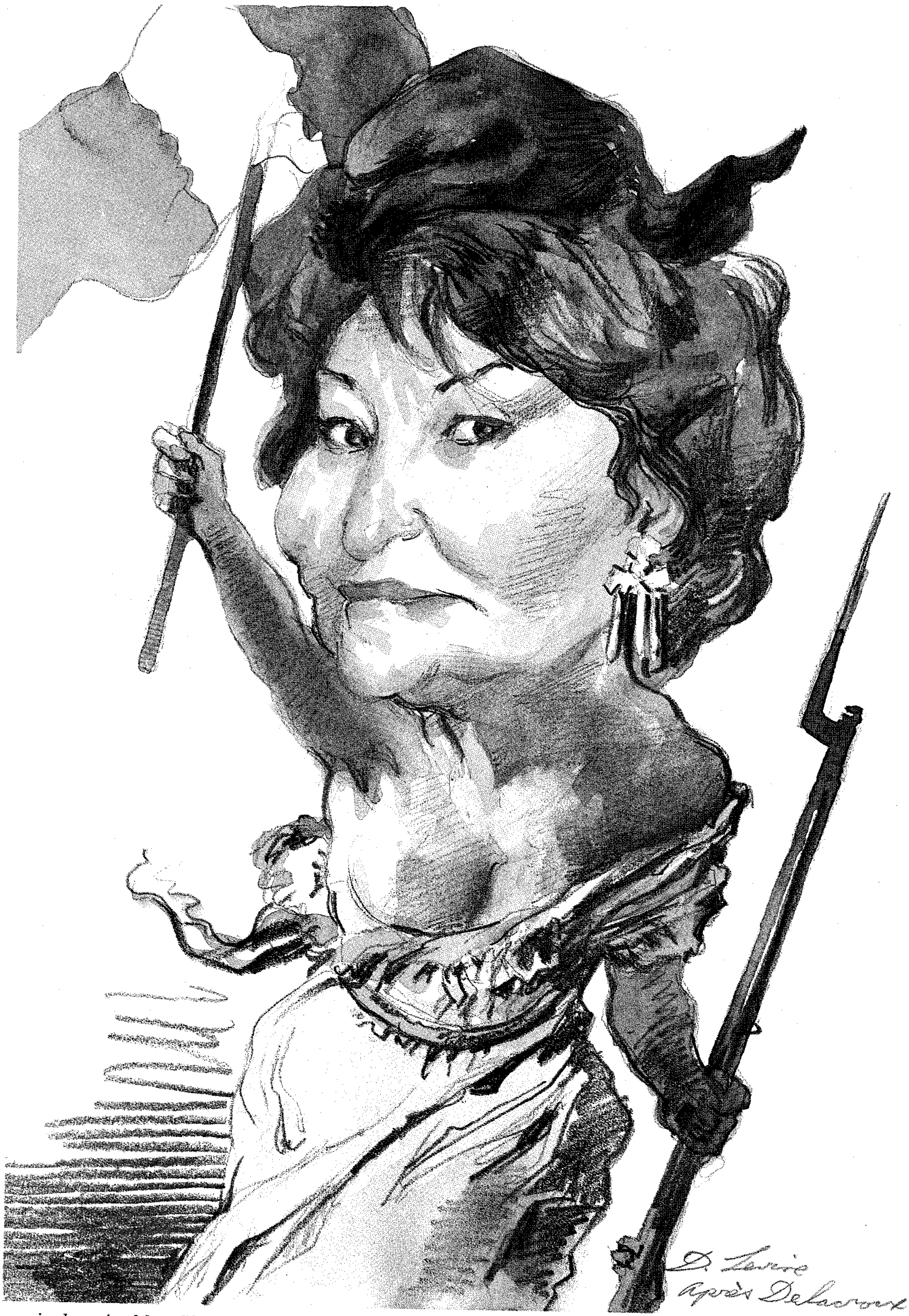
Well, not entirely. The *air du temps* in Paris today is not a scent from Nina Ricci, and it's certainly not vanilla, as redolent as the Sunday smells in the kitchen your mother abandoned when she went to the barricades, in May of 1968, or marched to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in August of 1970, to lay a wreath for the soldier's unknown wife. It's called *parité*—literally, parity—and it's about political power, and the women who thought it up know now that the smartest thing they did was to call it *parité*, because *parité* sounds so French and friendly and enlightened, like a citizen's right to free samples at a perfume store. Some French men—they regret it now—confused *parité* with their pleasant republican notion of "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*," the rallying cry of the revolution; they heard the word and it sounded nice, and they assumed they would never have to think about it again. "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*" was said by the boys of 1789 to be a "neutral"—you could say ungendered—concept. But it has turned out to be a hard fraternity, and not just semantically, for a girl to join.

Parité is not a neutral concept. It's a constitutional amendment—June 28, 1999—acknowledging the right of French women to equal access to elected office. And it's a new law—May 3, 2000—obliging the country's political parties to fill fifty per cent of the candidacies in virtually any race with women, or lose a corresponding share of their campaign funding, which in France the state supplies. It's also a shrewd projection by pollsters, and by the politicians who pay them to target the issues that will bring in votes and, just as important, to help the country look modern and "not like Greece"—the only country in Western Europe with a lower percentage of women in its parliament. And it's a public debate of unusual rancor, given that it's a debate not only between men and women but also among women; and women, as every French man sitting on power he is loath to share will tell you, are supposed to be too civilized, too "superior," to fight like men.

It can take a while to understand how *parité* happened. If you ask most French men for an explanation, they will smile and shrug and call it the *air du temps* and plead ignorance—and, in a way, they *are* ignorant, since, with a few volatile exceptions, they tended to sit out the *parité* debate, hoping, perhaps, that *parité* would disappear, and not wanting to appear retrograde in case it didn't. Now that *parité* is law—the first *paritaire* elections will begin next spring—the women involved in that debate are objects of some fascination, and even of a certain terror. They are, of course, Paris women. One of the points of *parité* is that the interests of women in the rest of the country have been so poorly served by the men claiming to represent them that very few of those women have had a way even to identify those interests, let alone make it to the capital to promote them. Paris is the salon where things like *parité* get decided, and, more to the point, the salon where women actually have some influence in the circles that decide them. Yesterday, that influence was discreet, or, as a French man would say, seductive. Today, those women are on the front page of every paper, and they are suddenly as familiar to people on the street as the city's ubiquitous, aging media *philosophes*, like Bernard-Henri Lévy—one of the few men who actually took a stand on *parité*. He was against it.

Parité in France began eight years ago, with a book. It was called "Au Pouvoir, Citoyennes! Liberté, Égalité, Parité," and it was written by three Paris feminists: a jurist named Anne Le Gall; a journalist named

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID LEVINE


D. Levine
après Delacroix

Women in the parity debate, like Françoise Gaspard (left) and Sylviane Agacinski, are objects of some fascination, and a certain terror.

Claude Servan-Schreiber; and, most important, Servan-Schreiber's partner, a professor at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales named Françoise Gaspard, who had once spent eleven years as a Socialist politician—all of them, as she likes to say, "illuminating." Gaspard has sat in the European Parliament and in the French National Assembly, and now she is the French representative for the rights of women at the United Nations. But she was most famously the mayor of the town she originally came from—Dreux, in the Beauce, about an hour and a quarter west of Paris and a world away.

Gaspard was elected in Dreux in 1977, at the age of thirty-two—which made her the youngest woman running a French city (and one of only two women running a French city with more than thirty thousand people)—although what made her a famous mayor had nothing to do with her age or her talent. It had to do with the fact that, a few years after she took over her *mairie*, the Front National decided to turn Dreux into a proving ground for far-right infiltration and intimidation. Gaspard was brutally smeared. She was harassed by thugs. Her life was threatened. Her parents were told to buy a coffin. And what a lot of other women in politics learned from her experience was this: that Paris's Socialist intellectuals might support and even encourage a woman like Françoise Gaspard in the Party, but the men who rallied the Party for them in places like the Beauce—the backroom dealers, the old militants, the men with the local interests and the local power—were not unhappy to see a disturbingly brilliant woman humbled, and some of those men even thought she deserved it for embarrassing them with her strong, principled "Paris" views. Gaspard is a shy and rather guarded person, but she steeled herself to do right by the Socialists, and through it all was an exceptional mayor. In the end, she even tried to protect the Party—she stepped down from the *mairie* the night after she was reëlected, in 1983—but the Party did very little to protect *her*. Five years later, when she wanted to run for senator, it distanced itself from her, and she started teaching instead. Not long afterward, she and Servan-Schreiber decided to write a history of women in the Socialist Party. They got together with Le Gall—who was an old radical feminist, and already a fierce *paritaire*—and the project changed. Their book turned into a short primer on political reality in France, and a prescription for changing that reality, and it was a surprising success, perhaps because on the surface *parité* sounded like such a reasonable thing to support.

ENTOMOLOGUE

Insects' little digital lives per-
sist in confounding us. Closer
in size to the quantum or
to the "cosmic particle," they'd
as soon buzz through as around us,
making no bones of us,
so to speak; and, whether they're blind
as the sow bug, say, or as Argus-
eyed as the jumping spider,
don't register our importance—
and persist so in their folly
it should be wisdom by this time
(applying Blake's Law). . . . Unless
it was always wisdom, that
absolute certainty bugs
possess, even in the egg,
as to What Must Be Done.

(What respectable June bug
would omit to unnerve you,
banging his head on your screen
half a summer night, or shad-
fly to be in-your-face—
indeed, drown in your eye?)

Being mostly mineral,
maybe they're miniature
long-since-perfected tran-
sistorized nuclear resonance
magnetic field folk! . . .

But I can't help you—couldn't
help even my little daughter,
whose entomological début
was "Daddy, are hornets' legs
bones or strings?"

—*Peter Kane Dufault*

The French are much less interested in being politically correct than in being what you could call logically correct, and there was an undeniable logic to the *paritaire* position. In 1992, when the book appeared, there were only thirty-three women in a National Assembly of five hundred and seventy-seven deputies. Who could object to easing the way for more? No one was talking about forcing people to vote for women; *parité* was about giving people a chance to vote for women if they liked those women. And no one was talking, technically, about quotas. Quotas are illegal in France—in 1982, the Constitutional

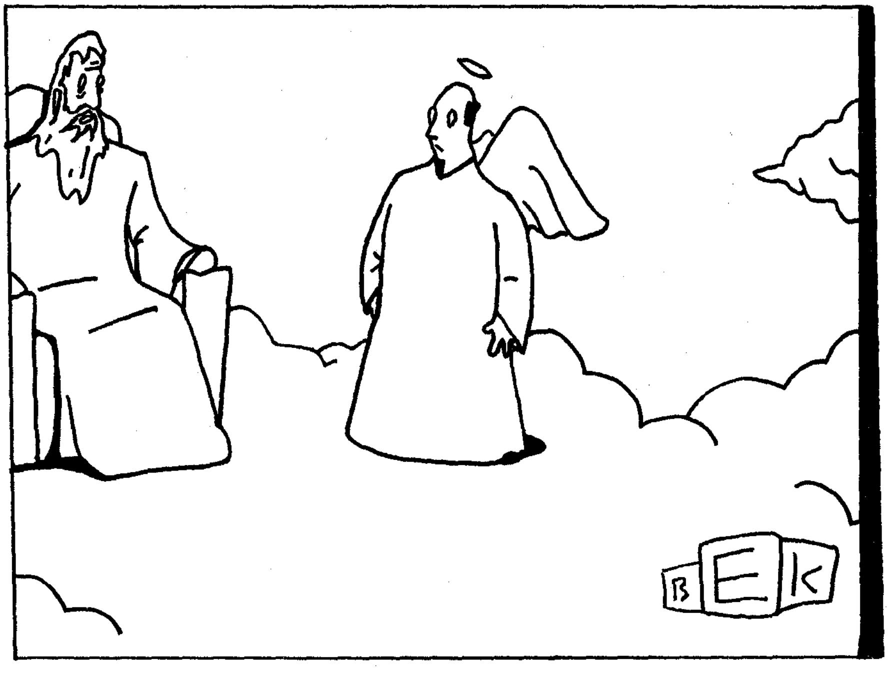
Court killed a law that would have imposed a twenty-five-per-cent-women quota for municipal-election lists, saying that it violated the republic's founding principles—and, in any event, the French hate them. The *paritaire* argument was that, while twenty-five per cent is a quota, fifty per cent is merely the female half of the "universal," or of "the people," or of the "neutral citizen." It was an argument that in many ways bothered Gaspard, who thought of *parité* as a political remedy, not as a sacred principle ("Of course, fifty per cent is still a quota, and no one wants that," she told me recently, with a sigh and a small smile), but she made it anyway. She saw *parité* as an efficient "strategy for forcing history," indispensable to French democracy but not necessarily a democratic process, and in this she was close to Geneviève Fraisse, who recently spent a year as the Prime Minister's special deputy for the rights of women and who, at one point during the *parité* debate, reminded the French that a hundred years ago they had to write laws compelling children to go to school. "Equality is not a natural or spontaneous process," Fraisse said. "It's something you achieve by force of law."

What made *parité* suddenly so attractive to the Party strategists, embarrassed in Europe and alarmed by the extent to which they had lost women like Gaspard, and even lost women who might be voting for *them*, was the fact that, whatever else happened to the idea of *parité* in France, it was not likely to get tossed into the trash can of American ideas that the French reject—ideas having to do with affirmative action and multiculturalism and communitarianism and all the other isms of an invasion that spells the beginning of the end of France. The French sociologist Éric Fassin, who studied and taught in the United States and now runs the doctoral program in social sciences at the École Normale Supérieure, says you can understand the entire evolution of the *parité* argument as an attempt not to sound American.

America, in fact, had never even thought of *parité*, and still hasn't, and its record on women in political office is practically as dismal as France's. On the other hand, America had something France didn't. It had feminists. It had women talking about women in art and politics and literature. It had women's-studies programs and women's-history programs, and it had serious graduate students who didn't refer you to their mothers when you mentioned a women's movement. French students, who have to find jobs in their own system, stayed notably away from programs like that. (The writer Hélène Cixous told me that the doctorate she got in women's studies twenty-six years ago is still the only one of its kind in France.) But American students were interested, and some of those students ended up in Paris, in the seminars Gaspard was organizing. She put them to work looking at women and political power.

At the time, there was virtually nothing left of the French feminist groups that had sprung up briefly in the nineteen-seventies, under the vague umbrella of a Mouvement de la Libération des Femmes. Even in Paris (where the biggest feminist bookstore of the seventies is now a maternity clothing store), the movement was as good as dead, replaced by a designer collection of literary and psychoanalytic theorists, like Cixous and Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray, who spoke (and wrote) an entrancing and often entirely mystifying language of their own, and, as Kristeva herself told me, "were for art and literature" and "the sweetness of life" and "*la mère sacrée.*" They were interested in the "female voice" and in dreams and in the permutations of eroticism, but while some of them, like Kristeva and Cixous, supported *parité* they were not at all interested in plotting feminist political campaigns. Their idea of a party was apt to be dinner at the Derridas, and Irigaray's major contribution to French feminist Realpolitik was to suggest that France was really two societies, one masculine and one feminine, with different, even contradictory values that could be reconciled only in a *gouvernement de couple*.

As for the old activists—"the mothers," people called them, although the mothers referred to themselves as "the daughters of Simone de Beauvoir"—they were more or less retired from battle. Liliane Kandel, who had worked at *Les Temps Modernes* with Beauvoir and Sartre, and still helps edit the magazine, says that the problem with French feminism was that it turned in on itself and away from politics—away, really, from any engagement—ceding the field to a few cranky theorists, like Irigaray, who were resigned to what Kandel calls "the idea of an ineluctable



"This is a little embarrassing to admit, but everything that happens happens for no real reason."

difference" between the sexes. Kandel likes to talk about the solidarity of the old days—about that famous march to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, in 1970, and about the "mourning procession" she led to the Statue of Liberty replica, on the Seine, in 1982, to mark the death of the Equal Rights Amendment in America. But most feminists today would say that solidarity was already a thing of the past by the late seventies, when the feminist publisher Antoinette Fouque—she founded Édition des Femmes—decided that she owned the words "women's liberation movement" and actually tried to sue another feminist publisher for copyright. Françoise Pasquier, the woman she sued, kept her own press going into the nineteen-nineties. Now she runs a fiction collection at Fayard. "You can't be against *parité*," she told me. "Our old feminism wasn't *populaire*. We didn't think about the state, about the society, about making any alliances with political power. But to say, 'We want action,' as Gaspard did, that's *populaire*. Great battles are *populaire*."

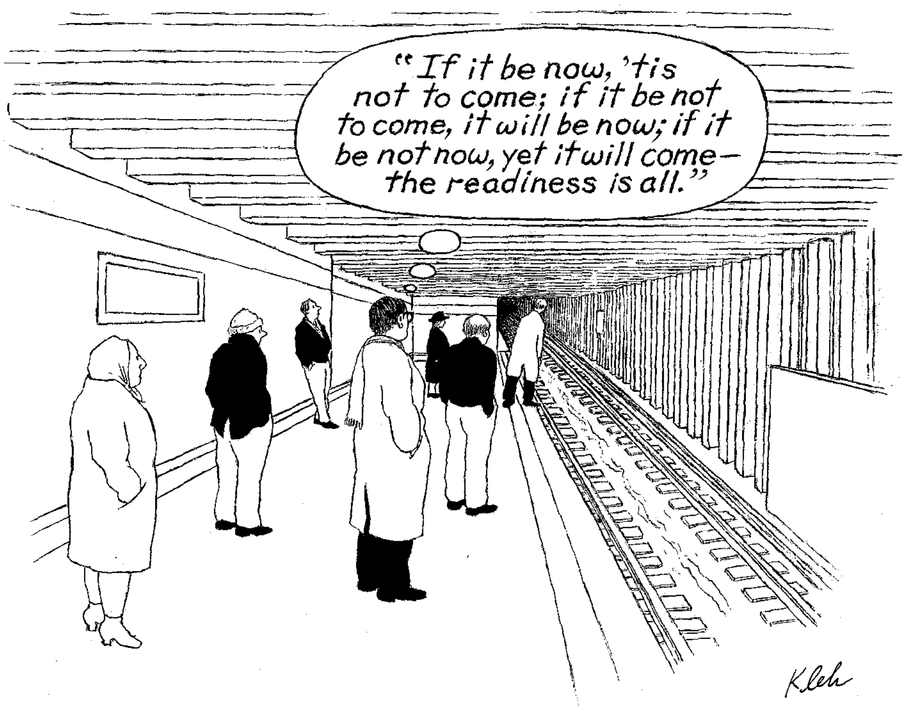
In 1992, Gaspard got a grant from the European Commission to look at traditional women's organizations—"the ones," she says, "no one in Paris talked about." What she and her students discovered, early in their research, was that there were more than three million French women organized and active in those traditional groups (groups like the Association of Catholic Women or the Women's Civic and Social Union, groups you'd never associate with feminism), and that most of them, left and right, thought that *parité* wasn't a bad idea and might even be a good one. In a way, Gaspard discovered how much the expectations, if not the lives, of ordinary French women had changed since those few militant feminist years—the years of the mothers—without anyone, not even the women themselves, noticing.

"This judge is known as tough but fair, with a great sense of humor."

It wasn't simply that so many women worked now; they were still traditionalists at home, at least by Europe's standards. They did the housework and cooked the meals and raised the children, and they rarely dreamed of asking their husbands to lend a hand. One of my best French friends, a psychologist who drives home from her office every lunchtime to cook a three-course meal for her husband, glared at me when I asked her why he didn't just go someplace near *his* office and grab a sandwich, and replied, icily, "It's what I choose to do." She said she believed, like Kristeva, that if you measured the sweetness of life you had to admit that relations between the sexes were "sweeter" in France than anywhere else in Europe, and certainly sweeter than they were in the United States.

The real change in those traditional French women was that, by the nineteen-nineties, they expected more than sweetness. They still talked about *amour courtois*—courtly love—as if it were actually practiced somewhere outside of a Cluny tapestry, but they also knew that France was a country with a thirty-per-cent divorce rate (fifty per cent in Paris) and the highest consumption of tranquillizers among women in the world. They didn't necessarily want to run France, but they didn't think anyone else should be telling them *not* to—and, more to the point, they didn't think the men who did run it were thinking very hard, or very well, about *their* lives and *their* problems, which (now that they did work) had to do with help and health and pay and time and family, and with why they needed Valium to make it through the day.

Gaspard decided to recruit those women, and she started meeting with their leaders. Servan-Schreiber (who had founded the feminist magazine *F* fourteen years earlier) began publishing a bimonthly newsletter called *Parité Info*. Word spread, and, as Gaspard says, "the women asked their mothers." No one really knew why, beyond the *air du temps*, these women were turning out to be so much more restless than the politicians who had written them off suspected. Most of them hadn't even heard of *parité* until *Parité Info* started circulating. They didn't demonstrate for *parité*. They didn't march or write articles or sign petitions. In the winter of 1993, when *Le Monde* published an open letter demanding *parité,* signed by two hundred and eighty-eight men and two hundred and eighty-nine women—one "neutral" citizen for every member of the National Assembly—it was the usual Parisian names you saw, the names that meant something in high political circles. But if you listened to those women—if you went to their meetings and heard them talk—the message they seemed to be sending was that they'd think twice before voting for anyone publicly against *parité.* Once that was clear, the *parité* debate began.


"If it be now, 'tis
not to come; if it be not
to come, it will be now; if it
be not now, yet it will come—
the readiness is all."

Not long ago, I was having lunch in my hotel with Françoise Héritier, who holds the chair in anthropology at the Collège de France—Parnassus, in French academic terms. Héritier writes on the subject "masculine/feminine," and presides over an ongoing public seminar at the Collège, and she is much cited by intellectuals on both sides of the *parité* debate, who would like to claim her. For intellectuals, *parité* isn't only a matter of political practice; it's something that raises fundamental questions about who (or what or why) women in this society are—whether they're "different," or simply one-half of a universal called "the people," or so indistinguishably "everybody" that it doesn't really matter which sex is sitting in the National Assembly making the laws that tell them what to do.

Professor Héritier is an old friend, a modest, sweet-natured person, undeniably distinguished but new to the kind of household-name celebrity that comes when the Prime Minister and his wife—a philosopher named Sylviane Agacinski, whose book "Politique des Sexes" is sometimes credited with making *parité* respectable—both cite you as an inspiration, the kind of celebrity that gets you the best table at the Montalembert. (It was the table where, just that morning, Bernard-Henri Lévy himself had been holding forth to a couple of journalists, stretched back and intoning the words "liberty" and "orgasm.") Héritier speaks softly, but the people around us, shrewd Parisians catching a whiff of the *air du temps*, strained after her every word with as much attention as they read their menus. They were fairly discreet while she told me about how it felt, as the only woman with a chair at the Collège, to be expected to take the notes at a meeting. ("Françoise," a colleague had said, "it's for posterity. Someone has to take them.") But when she got to a subject that was not, in my experience, of pressing Parisian interest—the use of high-lipid diets to stimulate early menarche in girls of the tribal nobility in Gabon—a well-known lawyer at the next table was so carried away that he leaped up, leaving his elegant trophy companion with a mouthful of lettuce, extended his hand, and introduced himself, saying that he had always regretted being too busy to drop in on any of Héritier's famous seminars. (She has been giving them for sixteen years.)

Gallantry is the first defense and last resort of an anxious French man—a way of turning the tables that have been turned on him. It may be that French men are beginning to sense that, with the advent of *parité,* they are in for a kind of feminism that will be much more radical in its consequences than the one that exploded in May of 1968, when girls left home with the Pill in one pocket and a copy of Beauvoir's "The Second Sex" in the other, and believed that the world was theirs. Their feminism, after all, was about rejecting the government, not joining it. And to a great extent their revolution was sexual—something, it has to be said, that very few French men found *that* difficult to live with, the possible exception being Charles de Gaulle, who had come to prefer the chaste countryside of Ireland, where the age of consent was still somewhere around thirty-five. In fact, when 1968 was over, French men discovered, to their delight, that their private lives were much more interesting than they had been before, while their monopoly on public life—the life of the state—was practically undiminished. Today, that monopoly is threatened.

Françoise de Panafieu was a deputy mayor of Paris until she took on her boss this spring and announced her intention of becoming the city's next and, of course, first woman mayor—"*Femme, elle est dans l'air du temps,*" the weekly *Le Point* said, by way of explaining that she might win. Panafieu roared with laughter when she described the old patriarchs of the French Senate trying to remain civil in the face of *parité* (and not doing a very good job, since they tried to kill the law in draft form, and now sixty of them have challenged it as discriminatory in the Constitutional Court). "They are *dying* of fear," she said, and tipped way back in her chair and roared some more, and it was actually quite a satisfying thought, inasmuch as the senators have managed over the years to keep the number of women in their ranks at five per cent. "Five per cent too many" is the way Panafieu describes their feelings, and she should know, since her mother was in the Senate in the nineteen-eighties and, as she put it, "was made to suffer there." Most of the figures in France are like that five per cent. There are sixty-three women in the National Assembly today—nearly twice as many as there were in 1992, but, as parliaments go, that's still somewhere between Trinidad and Tobago and Syria. There are still fewer than three thousand women mayors in a country with thirty-seven thousand town halls. Panafieu, who belongs to President Jacques Chirac's Gaullist Party, Rassemblement pour la République, says that she "converted" to *parité*, which was considered a Socialist—or, at any rate, not a Gaullist—cause, when she realized that if you let the men in politics proceed at their own pace it would be the year 3000 before they looked around, say, the National Assembly and thought to ask where the women were.

Michelle Perrot, one of the few prominent French historians with a specialty in the history of women, likes to point out that the origins of French republican misogyny go back to Salic law, which forbade female succession to Europe's Catholic thrones, and which the French (thinking, perhaps, of the calamitous regency of Catherine de Medici) seem to have enforced with more enthusiasm than anyone else in Europe. Perrot thinks that what she calls the "Salic attitude" was so ingrained by the time of the French Revolution that the revolutionaries simply preserved it under another name. They made a religion of the state—sacralized the state, really—and conferred a kind of divine right on the male citizen, and the result was that their "one-and-indivisible" republic, which granted civil rights to women on rationalist and universalist principles, was able at the same time to exclude them from political rights entirely and to enshrine men as the "political representatives" of the French family for the next hundred and fifty years. (French feminists are fond of quoting Tocqueville's remark about how in America "everybody votes except servants, slaves, and natives nourished by the state.")

Women didn't even vote in France until after the Second World War. The question of suffrage was raised, obviously, during the revolution, and again in 1848, and again in 1870—whenever France got rid of a king or an emperor, French men would dust off their "neutral" concept of liberty, equality, and fraternity in a one-and-indivisible republic, and then decide, with inscrutable illogic, that the indivisible was male. Pétain did think, briefly, of giving the vote to widows. But the first French leader to actually fight for suffrage was Léon Blum. He wanted to appoint three women to his cabinet (and, in 1936, he did), but at the end of the day not even those women had been allowed to cast their ballots to elect him.

It was, finally, de Gaulle who promised the vote to women. The General was no feminist, but he did see women as his best bet for beating the Communists at the polls once the war was over and the Germans gone. His promise came by decree, from Algiers, in 1944—to the great distress of Free French politicians from the Radical Party (rationalists and Freemasons and freethinkers guarding the flame of Enlightenment thought), who had tried to stop him on the ground that French women were too susceptible to dark, irrational Catholic influences to make responsible political decisions. But that, maybe, was what de Gaulle was counting on. Women voted for him, and, except for a couple of years in the mid-fifties, when Pierre Mendès France was Prime Minister, France was Eisenhower country for the next thirty-five years. The hard-won feminist victories of the sixties and seventies—the legalization of contraception, of divorce by mutual consent, and, finally, of abortion—were reluctantly passed into law by Gaullist or center-right governments, and one reason they were passed at all was that the women who shepherded them into law were conservatives, like Simone Veil, who was Giscard d'Estaing's health minister and had a following that no politician could ignore. Veil had worked as hard as anyone in France for women's causes—the abortion law is known as *la loi Veil*—but she herself claimed to despise politics. She thought that a woman should be a "bearer of ideas" (or, you could say, another kind of mother), and while she held a number of lofty posts and sat for three years in the European Parliament, she never ran for higher office, nor, as it turns out, did she ever seriously consider trying. It may be that she just got tired. In 1981, when François Mitterrand was elected, and the left took over, men were still the official "heads of family," and it was illegal for a married woman to sell any of her own property without her husband's permission.

None of this is surprising if you know France. What is surprising is how many women believed in their second-sex status, or at least believed that the sweetness of life in France depended on it. Balzac once wrote that in France women were slaves and all you had to know was how to put them on a throne, and, of course, it was Balzac's century that made a myth of bourgeois domestic life, locked women inside that myth, and convinced them that they really ruled. The result was that, a century later, a lot of French women still think of politics as something they have been spared—something that men, who *like* politics, have been doing for them, however badly. They are all for women in government as long as it's other women, and, in a way, given the tedium of most political lives you can't blame them. The pols in the provinces are not entirely delusional when they complain about the trouble they're going to have next spring putting together some version of a "chabadabada" slate—a man-woman-man-woman slate, after the theme song in Claude Lelouch's movie "Un Homme et Une Femme." They may be misogynists, but one reason a lot of them fear *parité* is that they fear the prospect of persuading the women they know to run.

The idea of *parité* originally came from Europe. I was told that it dates from the fall of the Wall, and evolved out of the guidelines designed for East-bloc countries petitioning to enter the European Community. But the only French politicians at all interested back then were the Greens, who, as it happens, had already started fielding *paritaire* lists on their own. France was so torn between staying "French" and becoming prominently "European" that most of the politicians hadn't even noticed that their neighbors were already slipping women into office, and that they were doing it gracefully, without laws to persuade them. The Scandinavians did it first. They started at the grass roots, encouraging women to run for local office, educating them in politics, going slowly, and getting everyone used to having them, so to speak, around. The result was that by the mid-nineties forty-three per cent of the deputies in the Swedish parliament were women, and no one in Sweden besides a few old Calvinist pastors thought this was at all strange. Marc Abeles, who studies the French National Assembly, told me that the politicians here might never have noticed if the Scandinavians themselves hadn't entered Europe in the nineties and sent women to the European Parliament—sent them in such numbers that, as Abeles says, "The gap was enormous: their women were the deputies and ours were the secretaries and the mistresses."

By then, of course, there were some women in France with a good deal of political power. But, more often than not, it was power conferred. French politics was still a men's club, with the occasional female guest—like dinner in the old days at the Knickerbocker or the Century. *La volonté du prince*, the French called it, meaning that those women had power because a man more powerful than they were wanted them to have it. You found them attached to the Élysée or the Prime Minister's office or the ministries, plucked from the top of the class at the École Nationale d'Administration, a school so rarefied that for years three-quarters of the students came not only from Paris but from Paris's four fanciest arrondissements. Or, rather, you found them attached to the men at the Élysée or the Prime Minister's—the best example being François Mitterrand's friend Édith Cresson, a woman of limited talent and chaotic good intentions who, for one disastrous year in the early nineties, was actually Prime Minister herself. Or you found them decorating conservative governments that wanted to look progressive, like the twelve women who were named to Alain Juppé's cabinet in the mid-nineties. Those women were commandeered for so many group pictures that people started calling them the Juppettes. Six months later—on a day of reckoning for women on the right—eight of them were dumped, en masse,

RICHARD MERKIN

TAKES

KIMBERLEY SOLZHENITSYN'S CALENDAR

Two years have passed since the Russian novelist and Nobel Prize winner Alexander Solzhenitsyn left the Soviet Union to take up residence in the West.—*News item.*

May 1—Derby Day buffet at Andrei and Bev Sakharov's. Bring cranberry ketchup for the ham.

May 2—Twins to band camp. Drinks with André and Nan Malraux.

May 8—Welcome Wagon visit in A.M. Remind Al to drain dehumidifier pan again.

May 9—Sunday dinner at the Lévi-Strausses'. (Claude and JoAnn. Children: Sean, 7, and I think Jason, about 4.) 1003 Red Fox Trail, Walden Estates.

May 10—Pick up twins at band camp. Take Al's old Siberia clothes to Fire Dept. Rummage Sale.

May 11—Crêpes Club here: Mimi Sartre, Megs Ionesco, Barb Dubuffet, Wendy Szent-Györgyi, Tracy Robbe-Grillet, Gail Miró.

May 12—Remind Al—bring patio trays up from basement. Nobel Prize winners' Spaghetti Dinner. Get Al's marimba fixed.

May 15—Al's Rotary Meeting: Brown Derby. 8:00 P.M.: To P.-T.A. Mummers' "Barefoot in the Park" with Mikhail & Candy Baryshnikov.

May 17—Ecology Day. Al's old "Cancer Ward" notes to recycling center. Twins' swimming lesson—2:30: Leisure Time Pool.

May 20—Leave Subaru at the shop: oil & lube. Twins to the Sakharovs'. Sam & Patsy Beckett for lunch and paddle tennis.

May 21—Hog roast at the Lévi-Strausses'.

May 24—Get twins' band uniforms cleaned for Memorial Day Parade. Al's slide show at Church Guild—"Russia: Land of Contrasts."

May 26—Blocked Writers' Benefit Car-Wash & White Sale: Church parking lot, 9:00 A.M. Evening: Gals' poker night at Cindy Böll's.

May 31—Memorial Day Horse Show: 2:00 P.M. Bring covered dish.

—*Ian Frazier*
Fiction, March 29, 1976

“I medicate first and ask questions later.”

like a litter of pretty kittens that had begun to scratch. It was said, in Juppé’s defense, that most of the Juppettes had been incompetent, but it was also, famously, said that true *parité* would arrive only when there were as many incompetent women in French politics as there were incompetent men. (Juppé didn’t last long, either.)

Most of the women who began in politics this way were anything but incompetent. They couldn’t afford incompetence, and neither, really, could the men who chose them. Mitterrand himself, whose eye for women was as political as it was personal, was enough of a Gaullist at heart to see the wisdom of courting a following of women loyalists during his long career and his fourteen years as France’s President. Some of the most prominent women in Prime Minister Lionel Jospin’s government owe their start to Mitterrand, and if those women seem to be much more numerous than they really are, it’s because Mitterrand chose so shrewdly that today they’re the politicians who are actually *doing* something—the ones you read about and remember. He spotted the Socialist deputy Yvette Roudy—sixty years old now, with five feminist laws to her credit—when she was a young woman translating Betty Friedan. He spotted Élisabeth Guigou, who is the Minister of Justice now, when she was working at the French Embassy in London. He spotted Martine Aubry, the Minister of Labor, when she was known mainly as Jacques Delors’s daughter, and launched a career so relentlessly successful that Aubry could well become the country’s first woman President. “That’s how we all entered,” Catherine Tasca—who led the Commission on Laws at the National Assembly, the commission that vetted *parité*—told me, talking about her generation of women in their fifties. Fifteen years ago, Tasca was running a theatre company in Nanterre; last month, Jospin named her the Minister of Culture. She says that when she and her friends started off in politics it was only because a man at the top said, “Do it!”—and that, in itself, was something of a revolution.

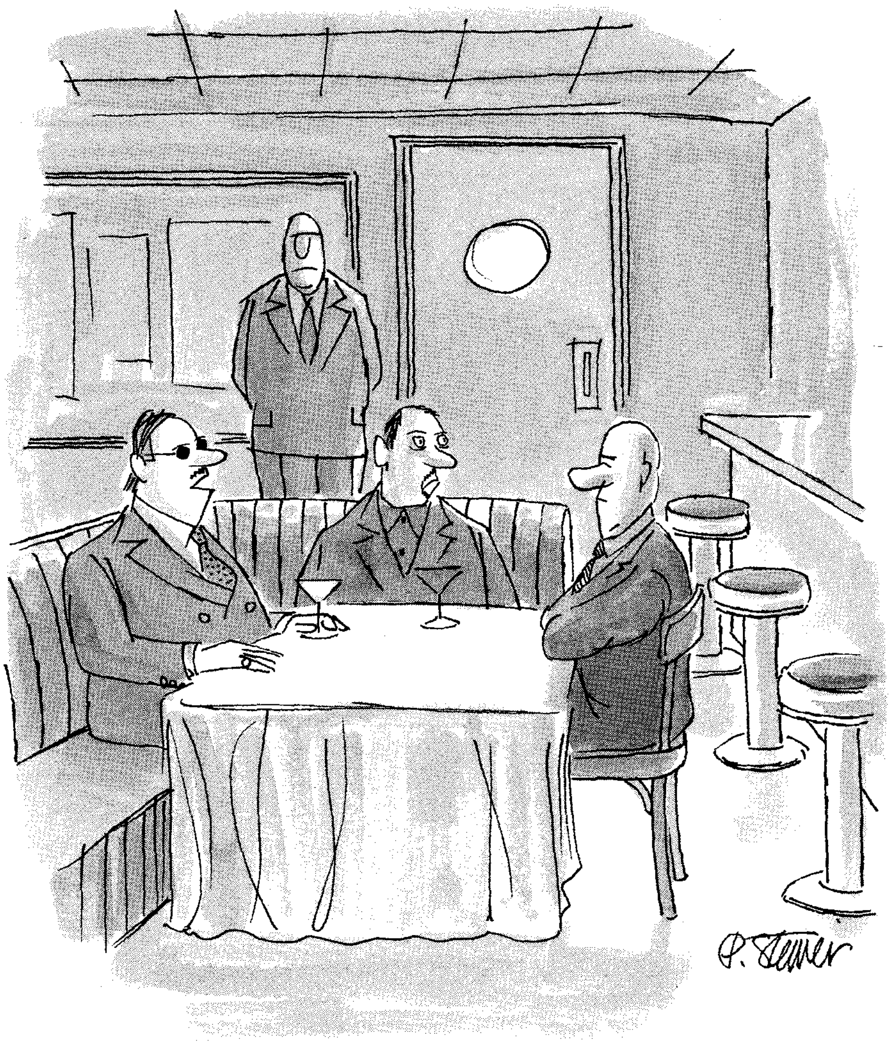
Noëlle Lenoir, who at fifty-two is the youngest person and first woman (Veil is the second) ever to have been appointed to France’s Constitutional Court, told me that, whatever the outcome of the senators’ court challenge, the appealing thing about *parité*, for her, was that it would eliminate women like Veil and herself—*femmes d’exception*, anointed women, women who are used to prove the rule that other women are not so capable and not so smart. Lenoir was in politics once. (“Politics,” she says, “was something I claimed as my heritage.”) She spent the first half of the nineties as the mayor of a town near Paris called Valmondois (Daumier died there), and, while she had a very good time running that town, she saw that “politics had not evolved.” She means that Valmondois was the exception—that even then, outside the small, civilized pale of Paris it didn’t really matter who you were or which party you belonged to. Men on the left still harbored the old Radical Party notion of women being too impressionable to honor “the Enlightenment principles,” and men on the right, who worried less about Enlightenment principles, thought that politics was simply something men did, like war or soccer or knocking back a pastis with your coffee at six-thirty in the morning, before you went to work. It amounted to the same exclusion. And the fact that by then most French women were working, too, hadn’t really made a difference. Geneviève Fraisse told me that, with France’s new thirty-five-hour workweek officially starting, she expects to find the men spending their extra hours at the *mairie* or the soccer club, and the women using them to catch up on the ironing. “The home, the *mairie*—these are symbolic places,” she said. “Our goal isn’t women in the *mairie* at ten at night. The goal is no one in the *mairie* at ten.” Faced with *parité*, the pols in the provinces have reacted with their own gallantry. “Think of the women!” the mayor of Carpentras, in the South of France, told me. “They have so much to do. They work, they have a family, they have a house to run. And now this! How will they manage?”

There are people on both sides of the debate who think that *parité* owes at least some of its success to the very traditional influence of the Prime Minister’s very untraditional wife. They say that, if Françoise Gaspard “baked the cake,” Sylviane Agacinski “put on the icing” that made men try it. Agacinski wasn’t part of the first years of the debate; she wasn’t particularly political, then or now. When Gaspard’s book came out, Agacinski wasn’t even married to Lionel Jospin. Her field was the philosophy of art. Her mentors were Derrida and Deleuze. And when she and Jospin did marry—in 1994—she was a woman of forty-nine, with what the French call "a life" behind her. A single mother with a son of ten, a couple of books (one on Kierkegaard) to her credit, and, she says, little interest in being a Prime Minister's First Lady—she calls that "occult power"—or even in playing the part, despite the fact that she's a woman of glowing good looks and considerable charm. She receives her students and her friends at home in black jeans and a pullover sweater, and "dresses" for lectures by throwing on a dark-red velvet blazer, and she told me once that the only time she goes along on one of her husband's official trips is when it's to someplace exotic, like China—someplace she's always wanted to visit.

Agacinski thinks of *parité* as the trip they took separately, though they ended up in the same place. She says that in 1992 she started reading—Gaspard for the politics; Janine Mossuz-Lavau, at Sciences-Po, for the sociology; Françoise Héritier for the anthropology, or what Agacinski calls "the *mixité* of the universal" (Héritier herself is "mixed" on the subject of *parité*); American feminist historians like Joan Scott; anyone who could help her refine a position. She didn't agree with Geneviève Fraisse, who reversed the Kantian dictum to say that *parité* was bad theory and good practice. She didn't agree with Scott, who saw paradox at the center of most feminist thinking, including her own. Agacinski decided that the philosophical basis for *parité* was very sound: there was one "human universal"; its definition was "men and women"; and it was the denial of this "universality of difference," and not the acknowledgment of difference, that had reduced French women to their second-sex status.

This was not a position likely to win the hearts of feminist radicals like Gaspard, who are wary of seemingly reductionist notions of sexual identity, and it certainly didn't endear her to the Jacobins of the debate, notably the philosopher Élisabeth Badinter and the jurist Evelyne Pisier, who opposed *parité* on what they called humanist and universalist grounds. Badinter and Pisier are women of exceptional privilege and influence in Paris's intellectual circles. They wrote crisp, contemptuous articles against *parité*, and eventually Badinter, who is herself the wife of a famous politician—Robert Badinter is a senator and former justice minister—took on Agacinski in an exchange of essays in the *Nouvel Observateur*. When we talked about those essays, Badinter told me that, to her mind, the French should be thinking less about the number of women in the National Assembly than about the fact that there isn't a single North African—"Frankly, it's harder to be a North African than to be a woman, but say *that*, and the *paritaires* answer, 'Women are not a category like the others.' " And she called me later to say that "as a Jew in France, whose family wore the yellow star, I reject all essentialisms." When I talked to Pisier, she said, "*Parité* leads to an idea I cannot accept—that women have a different way of thinking."

But, most of all, Agacinski's enthusiasm for *parité* on what she called "anthropological principle" did not endear her to the intellectuals in Paris's gay community, who were busy promoting a law of their own involving the civil and domestic status of homosexual couples, and who thought that Agacinski's (in the words of one gay critic) "two-headed hydra called humanity" flew in the face of contemporary understandings of sexuality. *Their* law was called the Pacte Civile de Solidarité, or PACS, and while a version of it was passed last fall, it wasn't the version they had wanted, which would have given gays and lesbians the right to marry and adopt children. Some of them blamed *parité*. Not *parité* itself but Agacinski's promotion of *parité*, which, they say, took a radical idea and slipped it into a very traditional vision of French society and the French family. They thought that her argument about sexual duality being "the only universal difference" idealized the rights of a certain kind of people and, by implication, discredited



"Little Joey invented the one-click rubout."

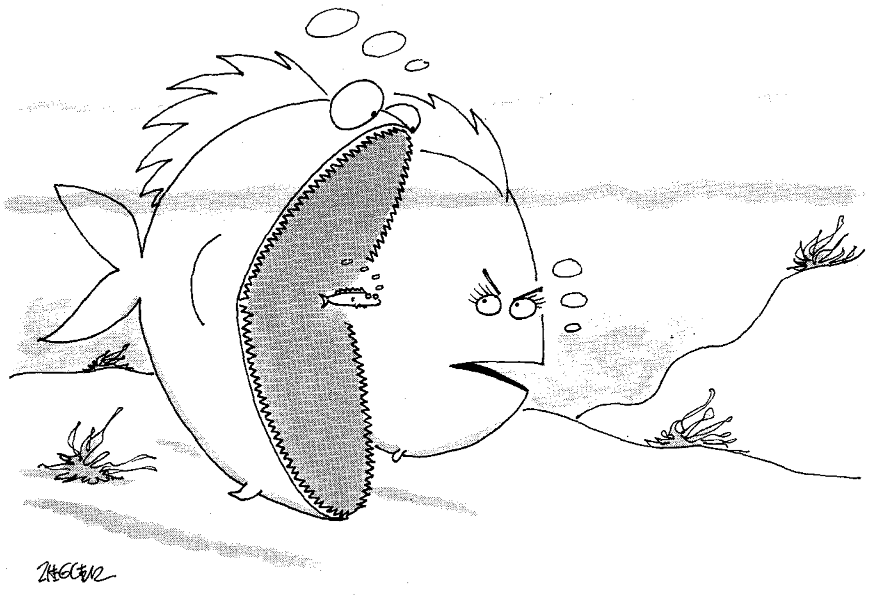
the demands of anyone who wasn't that kind of people. It would be fairer to say that, as far as the country's more macho politicians were concerned, the gay argument about sexual variety being "the only universal constant" made Agacinski's sound mild. There were furious debates about PACS in the Assembly for at least a year, and, in a way, they exhausted the opposition. By January, when the first draft of the *parité* law was presented, the harshest words anybody had for that idea turned out to be the ones you had already read in the paper, at the Café de Flore.

Agacinski is puzzled by her critics, especially her female critics. She thinks they live in a kind of republican élite ("Those women in high places are very attached to their high places," she told me) and don't take into account the conditions in which most French women live their lives, and maybe even believe that belonging to an élite means not identifying with women at all. "Our 'universal' is an abstraction," she said. "We talk about equality, but I agree with Hannah Arendt: for equality to be equality, it has to be concrete, it has to *happen*." That isn't so different from what most *paritaires* were saying, but it was certainly different for Lionel Jospin to be hearing it from *her*, and for the French to be hearing it from him. One woman put it this way: "Agacinski is the wife of the Prime Minister. Her roots are Polish. He's Protestant, and they represent the family in a Latin country. I say that's good. We've come from far behind."

In the end, of course, *parité* was the *volonté du prince*, and the prince of the moment was, undeniably, Jospin, who had become Prime Minister three years earlier. Jospin is a patient and honorable survivor of the Socialist Party wars, and he had wanted a cause, something dramatic to attach himself to, something to define his term. His slogan as a Socialist in the shadow of the Mitterrand years was "the freedom to invent!"—an imperative he took to include inventing himself as a different kind of leader. Running for office in '97, he put *parité* at the center of his platform—knowing, perhaps, that it was the one invention that he could be reasonably sure of patenting. Gaspard, who received a Légion d'Honneur from Jospin after the elections that year ("It was the first *paritaire* chevaliers' list" is the way she describes it), has become a huge fan. She says that "without Lionel Jospin *parité* never would have happened," and she's right.

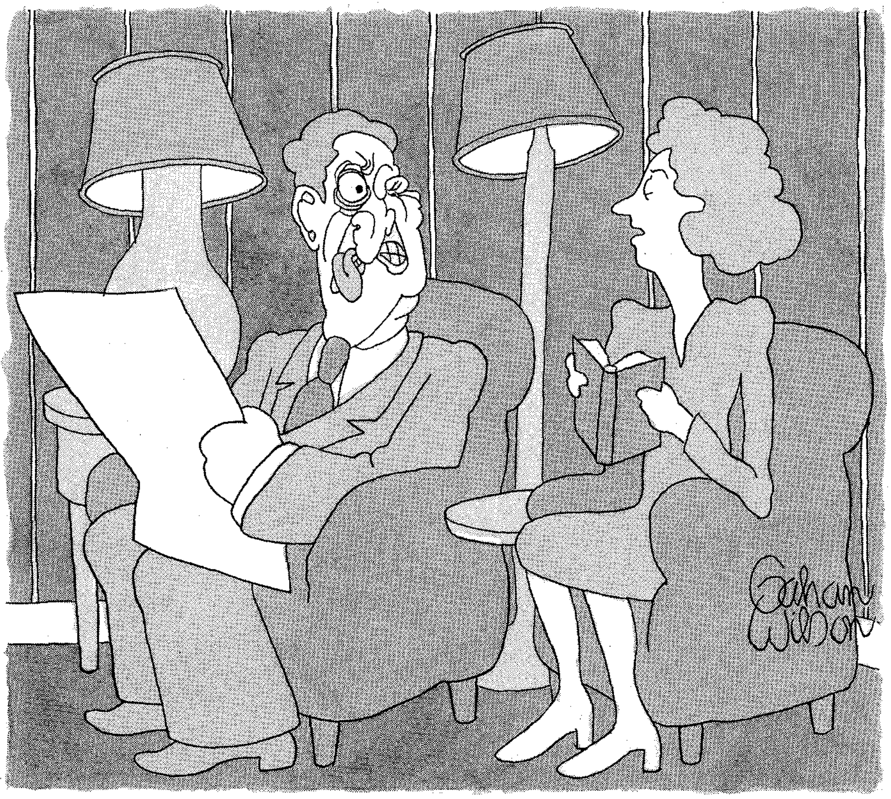
Of course, there is a strong possibility that *parité* is a thorny gift, like flowers the day after your anniversary. Maybe French men know something that French women only suspect—that the real power is somewhere else now, in the boardrooms, in the investment banks, in that mystical globalized cyberspace where money dies and is born again, in the big Brussels computer where "Europe" lives and old notions of politics are as obsolete as a typewriter. There's a woman at the head of the Gaullist Party today (there's even a woman at the head of the French Academy, which is arguably harder to get into), but there are no women running any of France's big financial institutions, and women hold less than seven per cent of the top executive jobs at the country's five thousand biggest companies and corporations. Noëlle Lenoir told me about a politician she knows—a good politician—who complained that, for him, politics wasn't profitable anymore; he wasn't talking about money but simply about making a difference and having an influence that mattered. The French have made an ideology of their republic, but in truth there's not much ideology left in the mainstream of French politics. The *grandes prises de decision* that Gaspard talked about in her seminars a couple of years ago are no longer the decisions slipped into those little "yes" and "no" slots in the wall of the Assembly chambers. Politicians today are supposed to broker interests, not create them, and to make life tranquil and civilized and smooth, like good French wives. The work they do is a kind of housekeeping, like ironing, and I don't know many men who iron. On the other hand, it may be ironing, not politics, that's been devalued.

The political women, by and large, don't care. They are used to keeping house. Most of them like *parité* because they think it means that France will be keeping its own house better; they see *parité* as an antidote to the mess that men, ruthlessly in pursuit of power and money, usually leave behind. Some of them like *parité* on principle. Some like it politically. (Élisabeth Guigou told me, with no evident irony, that Sylviane Agacinski was "the greatest thinker" in the country, a claim Agacinski would certainly dispute.) Some like it because they know that, like abortion in the United States, it stands for a whole set of attitudes and issues, and that those issues will have to be addressed if *parité* is going to succeed. Some even like it because it got the intellectuals in Paris arguing, and their argument, mystifying as it often was, gave the country time to get used to the idea of having more women in office, and even get a little bored with the idea—to think of it as old news, to want



"Oh, I'm so-o-o-o-o impressed."

it over and done with. Not that they are all comfortable with *parité*. You don't need to be a legal scholar to see that *parité* stretches if not the spirit then the letter of France's constitution. Some of the most ardent *paritaires* were actually quite uneasy about seeing that constitution amended, as it was last year, to introduce the principle of "*l'égal accès des hommes et des femmes aux mandats électoraux et fonctions électives*"; they'd thought that the law they were drafting on *parité* was both constitutional and sufficient. They hadn't wanted to enshrine *parité*, they said, only to pass it. They were grateful to Agacinski, but they thought of *parité* more in the way Gaspard and her friends had intended, as a piece of emergency legislation—a way to start redressing an injustice in French political practice, a way to reform old habits and entitlements and set precedents that would eventually turn that legislation into history.



"And just exactly what is that expression intended to convey?"

On May 3rd, only two of the sixty-three women in the National Assembly publicly opposed *parité*. One of those two women didn't vote. The other voted no, claiming the same divine authority that had prompted her to bring her Bible to the National Assembly during the PACS debate and wave it around the chamber as a warning. The men, who were under other, more earthly instructions, gritted their teeth and, with two exceptions, voted yes, in the interest of saving their own seats in the next elections. Some did it graciously, and a few had even been *paritaire* to begin with, like Bernard Roman, who is famous as the first deputy in the history of the French Republic to take a paternity leave. Some were less gracious. The kindest thing that Jean-Pierre Chevènement—the Minister of the Interior and, as such, the government's official rapporteur of any election laws—ever had to say about *parité* was that "a revolution can't succeed without a little pragmatism." (He thought that parts of the law were "legally contestable and politically excessive.") But none of them had a choice, really. Their orders were to stay out of the discussion, at least in public, and let the women prove—or hang—themselves. (Those were the house rules in a lot of places; Badinter claims that the editor of one Paris paper told her, "We decided to let the women here decide democratically what our position should be.")

The man giving the orders on the right was, naturally, the President, Jacques Chirac. Chirac had installed a bipartisan Observatoire sur la Parité in the fall of 1995, and had been officially, if somewhat bemusedly, *paritaire* since his own day of reckoning the following spring, when ten of the most important political women in France, some of them from Chirac's party, published a manifesto in *L'Express*, angrily demanding *parité*. After that, of course, everybody was officially "for" women. Which is not to say that everybody was happy. The Gaullist pols were uneasy, because the Socialists had tried out a *paritaire* list of candidates for the European Parliament two years earlier and had done terribly with that list. As for the Socialists themselves, they were even more uneasy, especially after Jospin insisted on running, in 1997, at the head of a list that was thirty per cent women, and not much more than half those women won seats in the Assembly. The obvious solution wasn't to give up *parité;* it was that every party should be *paritaire*. And never mind if that, in a way, was back to the old rules, or if the women who ran in '97, and lost, complained about having been handed the election districts no one else wanted, the districts that belonged to the other side. Most of those women were too smart to complain for long, at least out loud, since the point of *parité*, the seductively French point, was to give women a chance to lose, like men, not to expect men or even other women to prefer them.

French politics is, after all, French. Deals are struck, but there's no real pretense of stumbling your way to consensus. The system is royal. As Michelle Perrot likes to say, the revolution didn't change this; it simply replaced the king with what you could call a class of supercitizens—the citizens who know best when it comes to what's good for the people or what the people should do, and this means that the people accept an astonishing amount of discipline when someone in charge demands it. (Think of Paris in 1968, after the barricades came down.) *Parité* is a kind of discipline. Gaspard, who watched the first round of voting, in January, told me, "I know the deputies. They voted for it and came to me later to say, 'It's all your fault.'" ♦

FICTION

PERSONAL ARCHEOLOGY

BY JOHN UPDIKE

TERRI WEIFENBACH, "17.APRIL 1994"/JACKSON FINE ARTS, GA.

In his increasing isolation—elderly golfing buddies dead or dying, his old business contacts fraying, no office to go to, his wife always off at her bridge or committees, his children as busy and preoccupied as he had been in middle age—Fritz Martin took an interest in the traces left by prior owners of his land. In the prime of his life, when he worked ten or twelve hours every weekday and socialized all weekend, he had pretty much ignored his land. Years had passed without his setting foot on some corners of it. The ten acres were there to cushion his house from the encroachments of close neighbors and as an investment against the day when they would be sold, most likely to a developer, the profit going to Fritz's widow, Grace, who was six years younger than he.

The place, as he understood it, had been a wooded hill at the back of an estate until around 1900. A wealthy bachelor, marrying tardily, built a spacious summer house for his bride and himself on what had been a boulder-framed picnic spot, with enough trees felled for a glimpse of the distant Atlantic. There were old roads on the property, built up on shoulders of big fieldstones, too steep and with turns too sharp for any combustion-driven car; horses *must* have pulled vehicles up these hairpin turns, through these enduring tunnels of green. Even after decades, trees are shy of taking root on soil once packed tight by wheels. Standing on the edge of one of the several granite cliffs he owned, Fritz imagined farm wagons or pony carts creaking and twinkling toward him, the narrow spoked wheels laboring up swales, now choked with greenbrier, that he imagined to be roadways, bringing young people in summer muslin and beribboned bonnets and white ducks and straw boaters up past him to a picnic.

But a century ago Massachusetts land was mostly cleared, bare to the wind and sun, cropped by sheep and goats. Perhaps he was picturing it all wrong. The winding roadway ran head on into a spiky wall of monoliths; how had it climbed the rest of the hill? Near the house, granite outcroppings bore enigmatic testimony. There were holes drilled here and there, as if to anchor iron gates or heavy awnings. A veranda with a sea view had long ago rotted away, and Fritz himself had replaced a dilapidated pillared porch on the front of the house, facing the circular asphalt driveway that had once been a gravel carriage turn.

The woods held vine-covered mounds of jagged rock that he took to be left over from the blasting of the house foundations. In the early years of the recently departed twentieth century, crews of masons fresh from Italy roamed this neighborhood, building giant walls that now were gradually, stone by stone, collapsing. One night, a section of retaining wall holding up his wife's most ambitious flower garden collapsed, spilling not just earth and flowers but ashes, of the clinkerish sort produced by a coal furnace, and a litter of old cans and glass jars. The garden's subsoil had been an ash and trash dump. When had the garden been created, then? Later than he thought, perhaps—the same era when the concrete wells for the cold frames were poured, now useless pits roofed by frames of punky wood, crumbled putty, and shattering glass.

In Fritz's mind, the property had had four eras before his own. First, there was the era of creation and perfect maintenance, when the enthusiastic, newly married rich man was still alive, and servants bustled from the stone sinks in the basement out to the bricked drying yard with baskets of steaming laundry, and the oiled cedar gutters poured rainwater down gurgling downspouts into fully functional underground drains. Then this happy man died, and the widow, preferring the society of Boston to her lonely house on the hill, imposed a largely absentee reign, in which one dining-room wall with its hand-printed pictorial French wallpaper was ruined by a winter leak and the dainty porches, pillared and balustered appendages exposed to the weather, slowly succumbed to blizzards and nor'easters. There came an era when she, too, was dead and the house stood empty; perhaps most of the neglect and damage should be assigned to this interregnum, which ended just before the Second World War, when a young and growing family took on the place as a year-round residence. Central heating was installed, and a pine-panelled study was carved from the broad front hall, and the brick chimneys were repointed and the tattered roof shingles replaced. Improvements were halted by the war. The husband and father enlisted to sail the ocean, visible from the windows, which were covered with blackout paper. He returned as a rear admiral, and lived on the place until he was seventy-two and all six of his children had moved on.

From this long and busy era, Fritz dated most of the oddments he found in the woods—Mason jars, flowerpots, shotgun shells, rubber tires half sunk in the leaf mold and holding a yellow oblong of scummy water, pieces of buried pipe, rusted strands of wire testifying to some bygone fencing project. Tree houses had been built and abandoned amid the rocky woods; porcelain insulators and insulated copper strands carried the ghost of electricity; parts of a motorcycle engine, filmed with blackened grease, remembered a time when the steep old roads served a young man's racing game.

These acres had absorbed much labor: stacks of wood cut to fireplace length moldered between two still-living trees, and Fritz's shoes scuffed into view beneath the leaves a sparkling layer of carbon, the charcoal residue of old fires. On the lower reaches of the land, where a broad track across pine needles wound downward toward a causeway that led illegally, through several private yards, to a beach, there had been a virtual snowfall of pale plastic litter—container tops, flexible straws, milk containers. Fritz was rewarded, in his occasional harvests with a garbage bag, by finding hidden in the greenbrier and marsh grass tinted bottles of a nostalgic thickness.

By trespassers or owners, the land had been trodden, craggy as it was. Trodden and scarred. In an incident that had been described to him by an ancient friend of the previous owner, a certain dinner guest had slid, one icy, boozy night, into the wall of great stones on a curve of the driveway and knocked out, like a single tooth, a molar-shaped boulder that now sat some thirty feet into the woods—a permanent monument to a moment's mishap, too massive, in this weakling latter age, to be moved back into position. When Fritz inquired about bringing the equipment in to move it back, he was told that the weight of the machinery might break the driveway down.

In a seldom visited declivity beyond this great granite cube, Fritz, picking up deadwood, found a charred work glove, stiff as a dead squirrel, with the word "Sarge" written on the back in the sort of felt-tip marker that didn't come into use until the nineteen-sixties. Who was Sarge? Part of a work crew, Fritz speculated, who had carelessly dropped his glove on the edge of a spreading grass fire. Or a woodsman who, while feeding brush into a blaze, had seen his hand flame up and flung the glove from him in horror and pain. Nearer the house, raking up organic oddments in a spring cleaning, Fritz spied beneath an overgrown forsythia a gleaming curve of white ceramic and, digging with his fingers, found it to be the handle of a teacup. He dug up six or so fragments; the delicate porcelain cup, gilt-rimmed, had been dropped or broken, perhaps by a child, who in his or her fright had buried the evidence in a shrub border. The quality of the china suggested one of the early eras, perhaps the idyllic first. The earth, freezing and thawing in its annual cycle, can at last push up to the surface what the culprit thought had been safely buried and forever hidden.

Fritz's dreams, those that disturbed him enough to be remembered when he awoke, tended to return to a rather brief stretch of his life, when he was embroiled in a domestic double-entendre. There was his first wife, who in these dreams had a certain retreating smoothness, like a ceramic saint seen from below, and his wife-to-be, who was more vigorously plaintive, her discomfort seeming to occupy several corners of the dream's screen while he scrambled to hold on to every human piece of the puzzle. Curiously, in his dreams he invariably lost her—saw her flee and recede—so it was with a soft shock that he awakened and realized that she, and not his first wife, lay beside him in bed, as she had done for twenty years now. His confusion gradually cleared into relief, and he fell back to sleep like a living bandage sealing over a wound. His children figured in the dream dramas indistinctly, shape-shifting participants in a kind of many-bodied party halfway up the stairs; the party's main ingredient, however, was not jollity but pain, a pain glutinously mixed of indecision, stretched communications, unexpressed apologies, and unbearable suspense. Fritz would wake to find that the party was long over, that he was an old man living out his days harmlessly on ten acres covered by a vague mulch of previous generations.

The parties had been vehicles for flirtation and exploration, a train of linked weekends carrying them all along in a giddy din. He and his friends were in the prime of their lives and expected that, amusing and wonderful as things were, things even more wonderful were bound to happen. There were, in fact, two simultaneous parties, two layers of party: the overt layer, where they discussed, as adults, local politics, national issues, their automobiles and schools for their children, zoning boards and home renovations; and the covert layer, where men and women communicated with eye-glance and whisper, hand-squeeze and excessive hilarity. The underlayer sometimes undermined the upper and, with it, the seemingly solid structure of the interwoven bourgeois families. Cocktail parties were lethal melees, wherein lovers with a murmur made or cancelled assignations. In an upstairs hall, outside a bathroom, Fritz remembered a younger woman, smooth of face and arm, wearing gray-blue silk, daring him to give her a kiss and, as he backed off, saying, gently, "Chicken." She was enough younger than he that he had taken her, for an instant in the shadowy hall, as one of their host's adolescent daughters.

But for every moment he consciously remembered from that remote era, there were hundreds he had forgotten and that fought back into his awareness in the tangle of these recurrent party dreams. His sensation in the dreams was the same: stagefright, a feeling that what he was enacting was too big for him, too eternal in its significance. He woke with relief, the turmoil slipping from him, his wife absent from the bed and already padding around downstairs. Sometimes he awoke in a separate bed, because in his old age he helplessly, repulsively snored, and slept in the guest room. When he awoke there, his eyes found, on the opposite wall, a painting that had hung in his childhood home—in the several homes his wandering family had occupied. The painting, a pathetic and precious token of culture which his mother had bought for (if he remembered correctly) thirty-five dollars in a Pennsylvania framer's shop, depicted a Massachusetts scene, some high dunes in Provincetown, with a shallow triangle of water, a glimpse of the sea, framed between the two most distant slopes of sand. Was it that painting which had led him from that Commonwealth to this one, to this hilltop house with its glimpse of the sea?

Various other remnants of his boyhood world had washed up in the house: his grandfather's Fraktur-inscribed shaving mug, a dented copper ashtray little Fritz had often watched his father crush out cigarettes in, a pair of brass candlesticks, like erect twists of rope, that his mother would place on the dining-room table when they fed relatives from New Jersey. These objects had been with him in the abyss of lost time, and survived less altered than he. What did they mean? They had to mean something, fraught and weighty as they were with the mystery of his own transient existence.

"I'd give anything not to have married you," Grace would say, out of the blue, when angry or soulful. She carried into daylight, he felt, a grudge against him for snoring, though he was as helpless to control it as he was his dreams. "If only I'd listened to my conscience."

"Conscience?" *Chicken*, he remembered. "I don't know about you, but I'm very happy in this marriage. You've been wonderful. Amazing."

"Thank you, dear. But it was so *wrong*. That time upstairs at the Rosses', the way you loped toward me in the hall, you were scary—like a big wolf out of the shadows. Your teeth *gleamed*."

"Gleamed?" He couldn't picture it. He had dull, tea-stained teeth. But he recognized that the gleam was something true and precious unearthed from deep within her, giving her past a lodestar.

At the time he kept dreaming of, strange to recall, he had not had stagefright. He had felt calm, masterful, amid scandal and protest and grief. There had been a psychiatrist encouraging him. His mother, initially indignant, became philosophical, employing postmodern irony and a talk-show tolerance. His children consoled themselves by thinking they would someday grow up and never be so helpless again. In abandoning his family, a man frees up a soothing amount of time. Fritz found himself projected into novel situations—dawn risings from a strange bed, visits to lawyers' offices, hotel trysts hundreds of miles from home—and he behaved like an actor who had rehearsed his lines, who had zealously pre-

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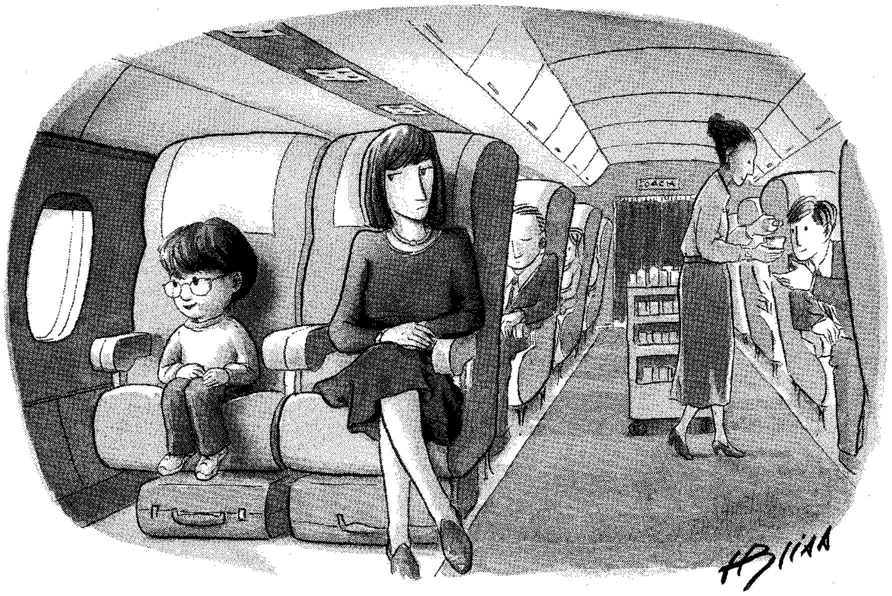
pared for his dramatic part, and played it creditably, no matter what the reviewers said. So why the stagefright now, in his sleep? It had been there all along and was rising up into him, like his death.

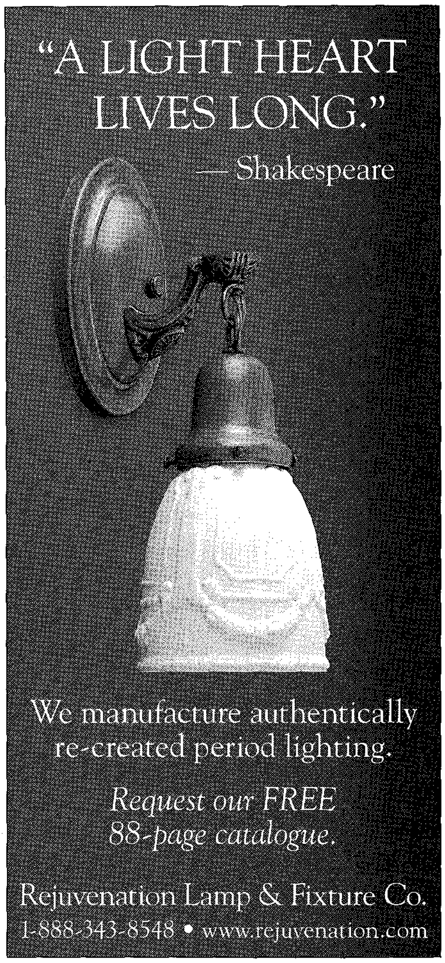
He had recently visited an old friend, a corpulent golfing buddy, in the hospital after a heart attack. Al lay with tubes up his nose and in his mouth, breathing for him. His chest moved up and down with a mechanical regularity recorded by hopping green lines on a monitor on the wall: a TV show, "Al's Last Hours." It was engrossing, though the plot was thin, those lines hopping on and on in a beautiful luminous green. Al's eyelashes, pale and furry, fluttered when Fritz spoke, in too loud a voice, as if calling from the edge of a cliff. "Thanks for all the laughs, Al. You just do what the nurses and doctors tell you, and you'll be fine." Al's hand, as puffy as an inflated rubber glove, wiggled at his side, on the bright white sheet. Fritz took it in his, trying not to dislocate the I.V. tubes shunted into the wrist. The hand was warm, and silky as a woman's, not having swung a golf club for years, but didn't seem animate, even when it returned the pressure. Our bodies, Fritz thought, are a heavy residue.

One of his childhood homes had been rural, with some acres attached, and while exploring those little woods alone one lonely afternoon he had come upon an old family dump—a mound, nearly grassed over, of glass bottles with raised lettering, as self-important and indelible as the lettering on tombstones. Many of the bottles were broken, though the glass by modern standards was amazingly thick, like rock candy, the jagged edge making a third surface, between the inside and the outside. Malt-brown, sea-blue, beryl, amber, a foggy white, they bore in relief the names of local bottling works, defunct. The beverages and medicines they had held were gone, drunk, for all the good or ill they had done—not so much as a scummy puddle inside an old tire left. The pile had frightened little Fritz, as a pile of bones would have, yet in his isolation had kept him a kind of obliviously cheerful company. He returned to it often, this trace of vanished life, as if to a playmate, glittering and ideally silent.

On his own acres, wandering, garbage bag in hand, in the lowland beyond the stray rock and the burned glove, he found a number of half-buried golf balls, their lower sides stained by immersion in the acid earth, the cut-proof covers beginning to rot. He remembered how, when first moving to this place, and still hopeful for his game, he would stand on the edge of the lawn and hit a few old balls—never more, thriftily, than three at a time—into the woods down below. They seemed to soar forever before disappearing into the trees. He had never expected to find them. They marked, he supposed, the beginning of his era. ♦



"I spy with my little eye—something on fire."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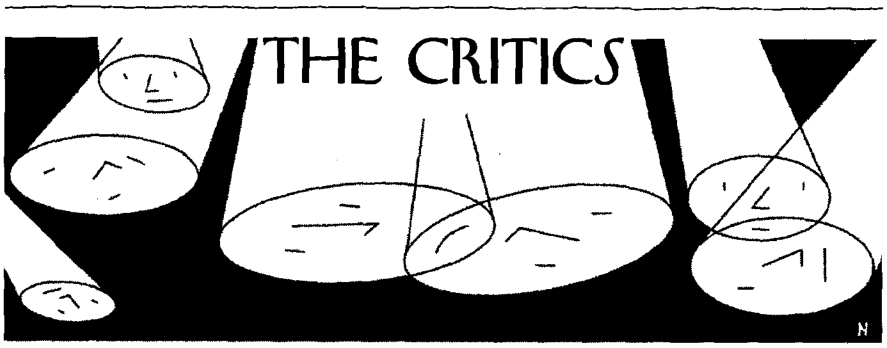

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Adventures in fact and fiction from W. G. Sebald.

BY ANTHONY LANE

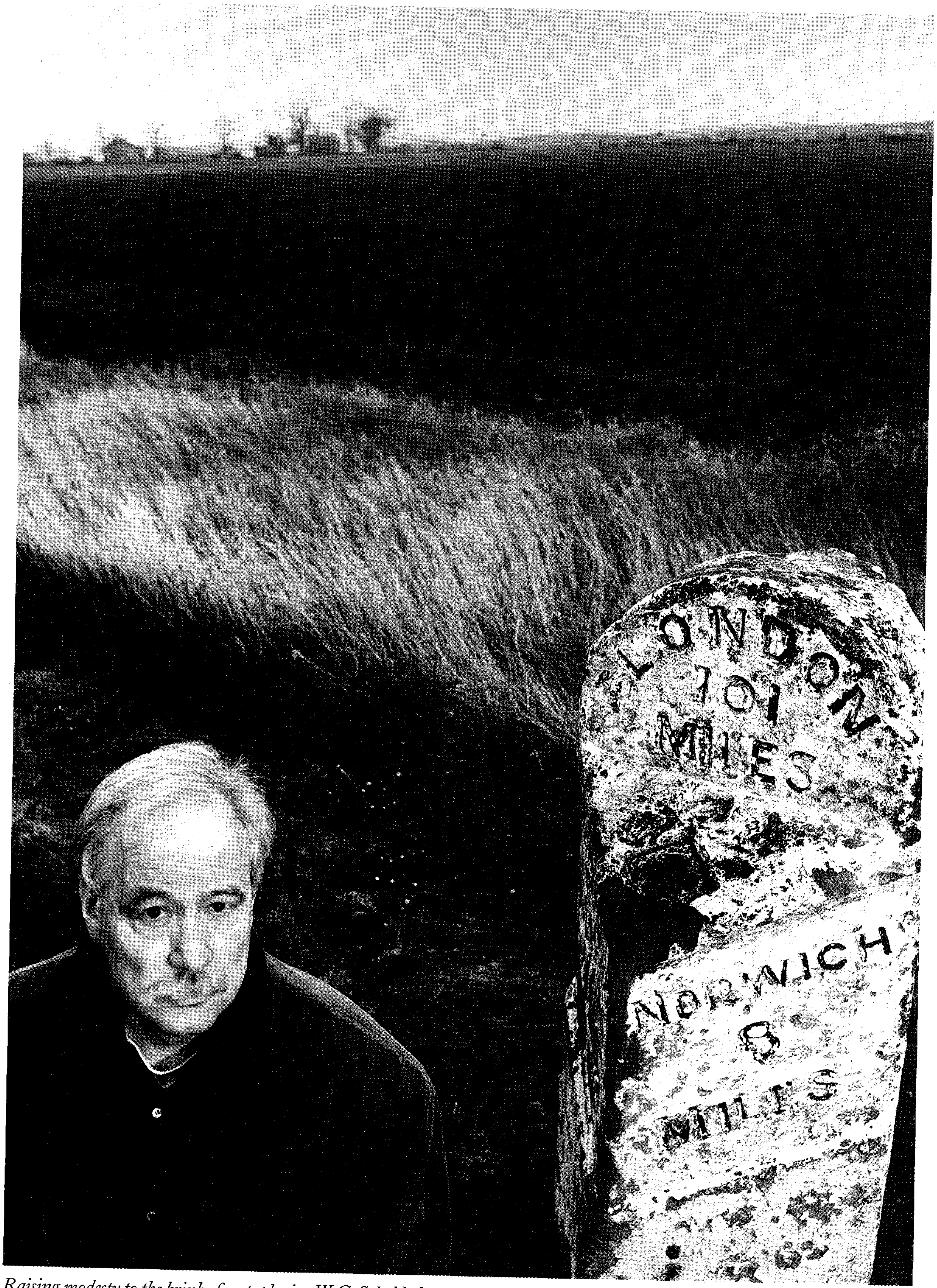
The new book by W. G. Sebald, "Vertigo" (New Directions; $23.95), is also the oldest. It appeared in German in 1990; the English translation, by Michael Hulse, has arrived after a decade, during which two other, later books—first "The Emigrants" and then "The Rings of Saturn"—have made a name and a place for themselves. The confusion stems from nothing more than the strategies of publishers, and yet it feels gratifyingly true to the world of Sebald, where nothing can be trusted to cleave to its proper place. Sebald was born in Germany in 1944; in 1970, he moved to England for good, although, to read his collected works, which both unsettle the nerves and ponder the resettlement of displaced persons, you can hardly imagine him pausing to unpack, let alone putting down roots. Since 1987, he has been Professor of European Literature at the University of East Anglia, where, for five years, he was also the first director of the British Centre for Literary Translation; fluent to a fault in his adopted tongue, he chooses not to write in it, entrusting Hulse with the alchemical task. Yet there is barely a handful of English-speaking writers who can rival the reach and play of Sebald's three publications to date, and connoisseurs of national contention will note that, in literature as in soccer, German talent has once again beaten the English at their own game.

"Vertigo" begins like this: "In mid-May of the year 1800 Napoleon and a force of 36,000 men crossed the Great St. Bernard pass, an undertaking that had been regarded until that time as next to impossible." "The Rings of Saturn" began like this: "In August 1992, when the dog days were drawing to an end, I set off to walk the county of Suffolk, in the hope of dispelling the emptiness that takes hold of me whenever I have completed a long stint of work." And "The Emigrants" began like this: "At the end of September 1970, shortly before I took up my position in Norwich, I drove out to Hingham with Clara in search of somewhere to live."

In May, 2000, I think I see a pattern. Sebald is a rare and elusive species, and the question of what his books are about makes him hard to capture and classify; yet what could be crisper or more amenable than those opening words, as plain as the entries in a journal? These particular events, we learn, happened in a determinable place at a given time; we also learn to be grateful for that giving, because, as the books proceed, we are reminded of all that time takes away. "The Rings of Saturn," for instance, prides itself on a kind of diplomatic immunity; arising from a ramble through various backwaters of southeastern England, it crosses and recrosses the borders between genres, taking up temporary residence in fiction, autobiography, thumbnail biographies of other men, travellers' tales, and a prayerful rumination on the crumbling of livelihoods and lives. The personal histories within it ascend and decline as irreparably, and sometimes as nobly, as nation-states; it is as though we were all empires unto ourselves—each of us our own Napoleon.

"Vertigo," which is even more prone to disorientation than its fellow-volumes, is divided into four parts: "Beyle, or Love Is a Madness Most Discreet," "All'Estero," "Dr. K. Takes the Waters at Riva," and "Il Ritorno in Patria." Prospective readers may be feeling seasick before the book is even under sail. To have your wits about you is one thing, but what about your multiple language skills, not to mention your easy familiarity with the full parade of European literature? Fear not: "Vertigo" is designed to provoke and perplex, but, barring an occasional trip to the dictionary, there is nothing here to put you off. Beyle is Marie-Henri Beyle, better known as Stendhal, and the first section recounts the time—or, at least, his memories of the time—that he spent as a cavalry lieutenant and then advances delicately to some of the manifold complications of his erotic life, before alighting on his death in Paris in 1842, "with the approach of spring already in the air." *All'estero* means "abroad" and refers to Sebald's peregrinations in Austria and Italy, including short disquisitions on Pisanello and Giotto (whose lamenting angels, Sebald brilliantly notes, are so deep-browed that "one might have supposed them blindfolded") and a long excursus into the vexing question of a lost passport. Dr. K. is Kafka, and the title delivers precisely what it promises: Kafka did indeed travel to Vienna, Trieste, Venice, and Riva in the autumn of 1913. The last section of the book, again, means what it sounds like: the return to the country—in this case, the place of Sebald's birth, in southwestern Germany. That "Vertigo" manages to close with a flickering reference to the Great Fire of London, in 1666, as described by Samuel Pepys, should come as no surprise. Such is the first rule of Sebaldry: there is a world elsewhere.

Those are the four limbs of which "Vertigo" is constituted, and they leave us with a mystery: are they made incorporate, and, if so, does the body breathe? What on earth does a French officer of dragoons, as yet uncorrupted by syphilis and novel-writing, have to do with the meanderings of a university professor, nearly two centuries later, picking his way through the attic of an arthritic friend and finding, among other things,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Raising modesty to the brink of metaphysics. W. G. Sebald photographed in England, in 1998, by Dudley Reed.

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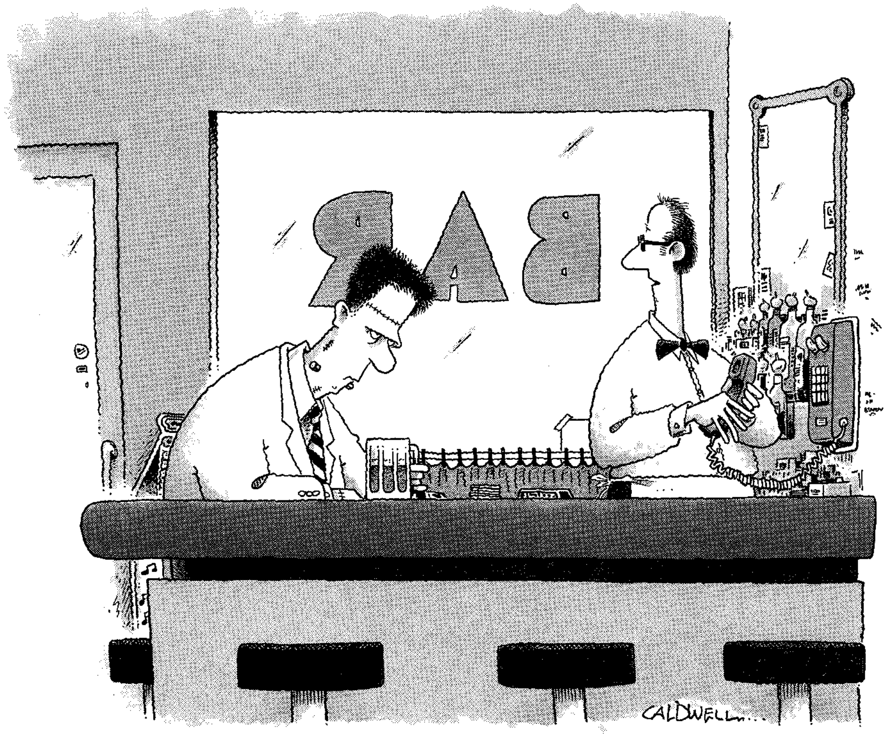

"It's the Bride—are you here?"

• •

a tuba, a goldfinch cage, an abandoned wasps' nest, and "a hairless china doll"? Well, for a start, among those other things is a tailor's dummy, wearing breeches, a jacket, and a plumed hat. "From what I have been able to discover since," Sebald writes, "that uniform, trimmed in the colors pike-gray and green, almost certainly belonged to one of the Austrian chasseurs who fought against the French as irregulars around 1800." Contact. The present brushes against the past, and look what happens: the narrator touches one of the hanging sleeves, and, "to my utter horror, it crumbled into dust." We can assume, I think, that it was once worn by a young man in love.

There are some, perhaps, who will choose not to accept that coincidence—who will claim that Sebald is fixing the evidence in order to stitch together his scraps of sensation. I would reply only that nowhere in Sebald will you find a declaration of infallibility; the fabric of memory may be strong and richly threaded, but it will not always be true. When someone as perceptive as Stendhal gets his facts mixed up with his legends, what hope is there for the rest of us? Stendhal claims to remember a certain General Marmont clad in the blue robes of state, although the General must have been wearing military uniform at the time; he also remembers the town of Ivrea in fading light, with the mountains in the background, although he later discovers that his recollection was culled from an engraving. And here is the crucial point: the error does not make his impressions any less strong. Memory, in short, is engraved not merely by the life we have led but by the life of the mind (books that we have studied or opened in passing, pictures glimpsed on a wall), by all the lives we so nearly led but missed by an inch, and—if we grant enough leeway to the imagination—by the lives of others, which can cut into ours every bit as sharply as our own experience.

If "The Emigrants," which represented his first appearance in English, lay within a breath of greatness, that was because its author submitted himself so willingly to the motions of history. We somehow expect literary débutants, whatever their age, to press their case or show their tricks, yet here was a man who raised modesty to the brink of metaphysics. There were four emigrants in all, far-flung Jewish fugitives from oppression, and you could almost hear the rustling sigh of relief as Sebald moved

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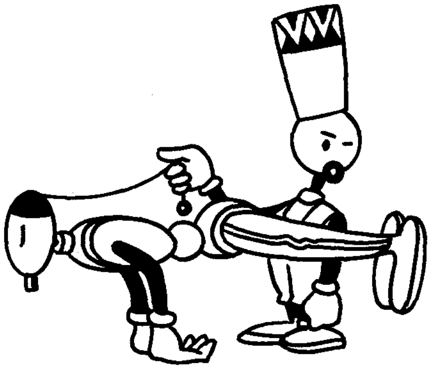
aside and floated his voice into theirs. An account of the painter Max Ferber, for instance, whom Sebald first knew in England in the nineteen-sixties, elides into a diary kept by Ferber's mother, and from there into a memoir of Sebald's own visit—as good as a pilgrimage, like most of this writer's journeyings—to the German town where a tombstone, though not a tomb, testifies to the mother's unknown fate. It says simply that Luisa Ferber was deported in 1941, although Sebald has told us earlier that she was murdered in Riga, along with her husband, Fritz. The title of the book suddenly feels darker than ever. Sebald bends his whole being to the problem of reading and hearing one's way back into a past that is, to a terrible degree, beyond all of us, but there are moments when his effort serves only to remind you that by far the most populous migration, that of an entire race, was to an unfindable land.

It is not easy to arrive at "Vertigo" fresh from the travail of "The Emigrants." Beside those devout intimations of a vast, engulfing tragedy, the problems of paying hotel bills in quiet Italian towns can hardly help seeming inessential. But there is nothing frivolous in "Vertigo," and the more you pick at it the more tightly it weaves its unease. The narrator slips in and out of the story like a child squeezing through the railings of a park; the technique was obviously ideal preparation for the graver concerns of "The Emigrants," but it also bestows benefits of its own, minutely shifting the scenery of the action and forcing you to wonder not only what is going on but whether something awful, or awfully funny, is about to occur. During a discussion of narrow Venetian streets, and of the fluid speed with which people enter and leave them, Sebald writes, "These brief exhibitions are of an almost theatrical obscenity and at the same time have an air of conspiracy about them, into which one is drawn against one's will. If you walk behind someone in a deserted alleyway, you only have to quicken your step slightly to instill a little fear into the person you are following." Asked once by a hotelkeeper what he was writing, he said, "I did not know for certain myself, but had a growing suspicion that it might turn into a crime story." The only question is whether he himself would be villain or victim. I am torn between demanding that W. G. Sebald be given the Nobel Prize and suggesting as politely as possible that he be locked up.

Of course, no attorney could prove that the "I" who wrote the book—prim, pensive, and lightly paranoid—bears more than an unfortunate resemblance to the urbane and, by all accounts, highly congenial professor of literature from East Anglia. Sebald himself plays a wicked game on this score. "Vertigo," like all his books, is littered with photographs and occasional drawings, none of them captioned or attributed; they provide documentary evidence that his recollections are authentic and, as with Stendhal's engraving, also confirm how rapidly our certainties can warp and fade. When Sebald goes to an Italian police station to apply for a replacement passport, we see a shot of the application form, with his name filled in. Except that half of it is blacked out. Sebald himself has (and this may be a breach of the law) gone back and erased all but the first letter of his first name; like a captured airman, he will never give away his most defining secret. Similarly, ten careful minutes with a map of Germany will tell you that W., as he calls his birthplace, is Wertach im Allgäu (for he happily identifies the surrounding towns), yet he prefers to keep it encoded, or perhaps nudge it to the edge of the fictional. There was a point in "Vertigo" when all I could think of was that line of Woody Allen's: "Should I marry W? Not if she won't tell me the other letters in her name."

We know, in part, where Sebald picked up the habit. The tremulous "Dr. K." who inhabits the third portion of the book is the Kafka who equipped his most famous novel with a hero known only as Josef K. By now, perhaps, such truncation is dangerously close to a mannerism, but both writers are all too aware



I was in another world, enraptured, unable to move ...

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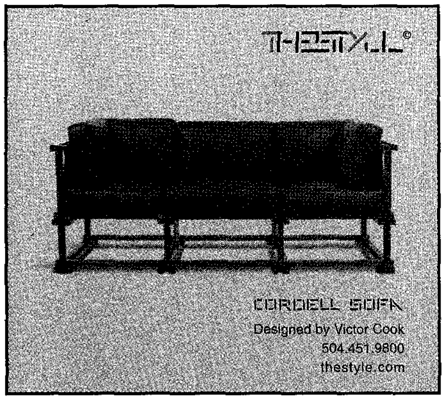

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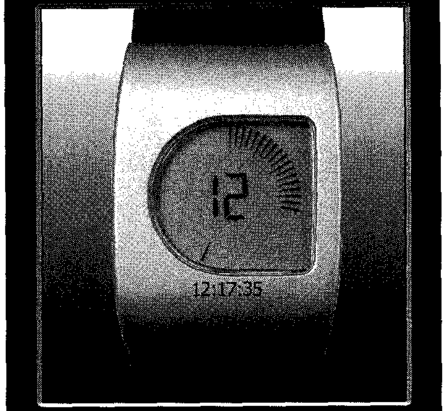
of the conditions—bureaucratic, murderous, or else insanely boring—under which human beings are reduced to lists and abbreviations. Many of the Kafka components in "Vertigo" are stolen, or brazenly borrowed, from Kafka's letters to Felice Bauer and from his 1916 story "The Hunter Gracchus," just as the opening segment trades heavily on "The Life of Henri Brulard"—the name with which Stendhal (who wasn't even called Stendhal) disguised himself, and fooled nobody, for the purposes of autobiography. All of which is enough to induce vertigo in anyone. I trawled through some of the source material and came away applauding Sebald's powers of précis as well as his tiny editorial twists. According to "Vertigo," Kafka, when staying at the Hotel Sandwirth, in Venice, "exchanged not a word with a living soul excepting the hotel staff"; according to Kafka himself, he spoke with *almost* no one—"*rede fast mit keinem Menschen*"—except the staff, which is not quite the same thing. This is not to quibble with Sebald, who knows a hundred times more about Kafka than most of us, and who has never staked his claim as a biographer, but to note how he has subtly deepened the pit of his subject's solitude—made it, dare one say, more Kafkaesque.

The debt to Kafka does not end there. Sebald's shining, wary, unexcitable prose is unmistakably his own, and Michael Hulse works wonders to maintain the quiet flow; but it keeps reminding you of other writers, and it was not until I read "Vertigo" that the comparison with Kafka hit home. You would not know it from the anxious praise that has been lavished on Sebald, but here is the shocking truth: the guy is an easy read. Heaven knows, he is serious enough, and unblushingly bookish, and the difficulties—historical and philosophical—that he takes on are as tough to negotiate as those ill-lit backstreets of Venice. But still, he is an easy read, just as Kafka is. Sometimes you wish that they weren't—that the sentences didn't draw you on with such courteous grace toward the soft verges of dread. Kafka can be as straight-talking as a fairy tale: "As Gregor Samsa awoke one morning from uneasy dreams he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect." Thrown by such simplicity, we toss meanings at it like the



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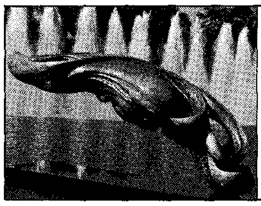

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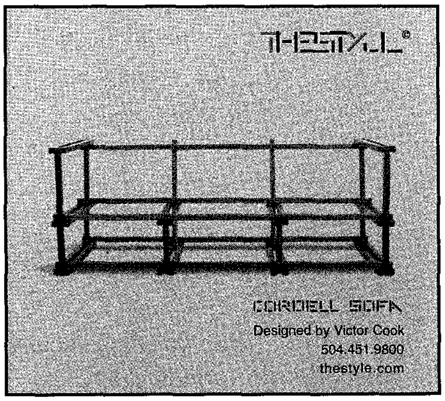

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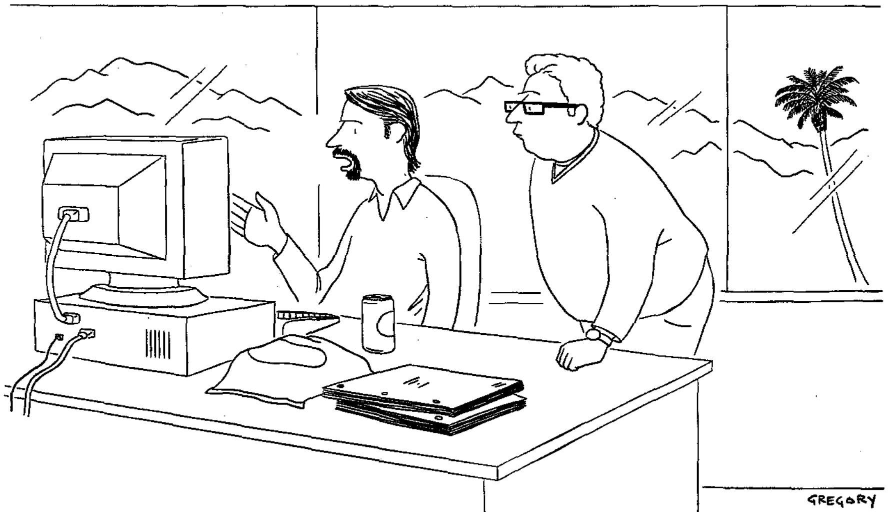
Samsa family throwing fruit at their son's shell, until an apple sticks and rots. Sebald does not interpret Kafka; he revives him, and, like a director, positions him in a scene that turns your stomach. Kafka looks horribly at home here:

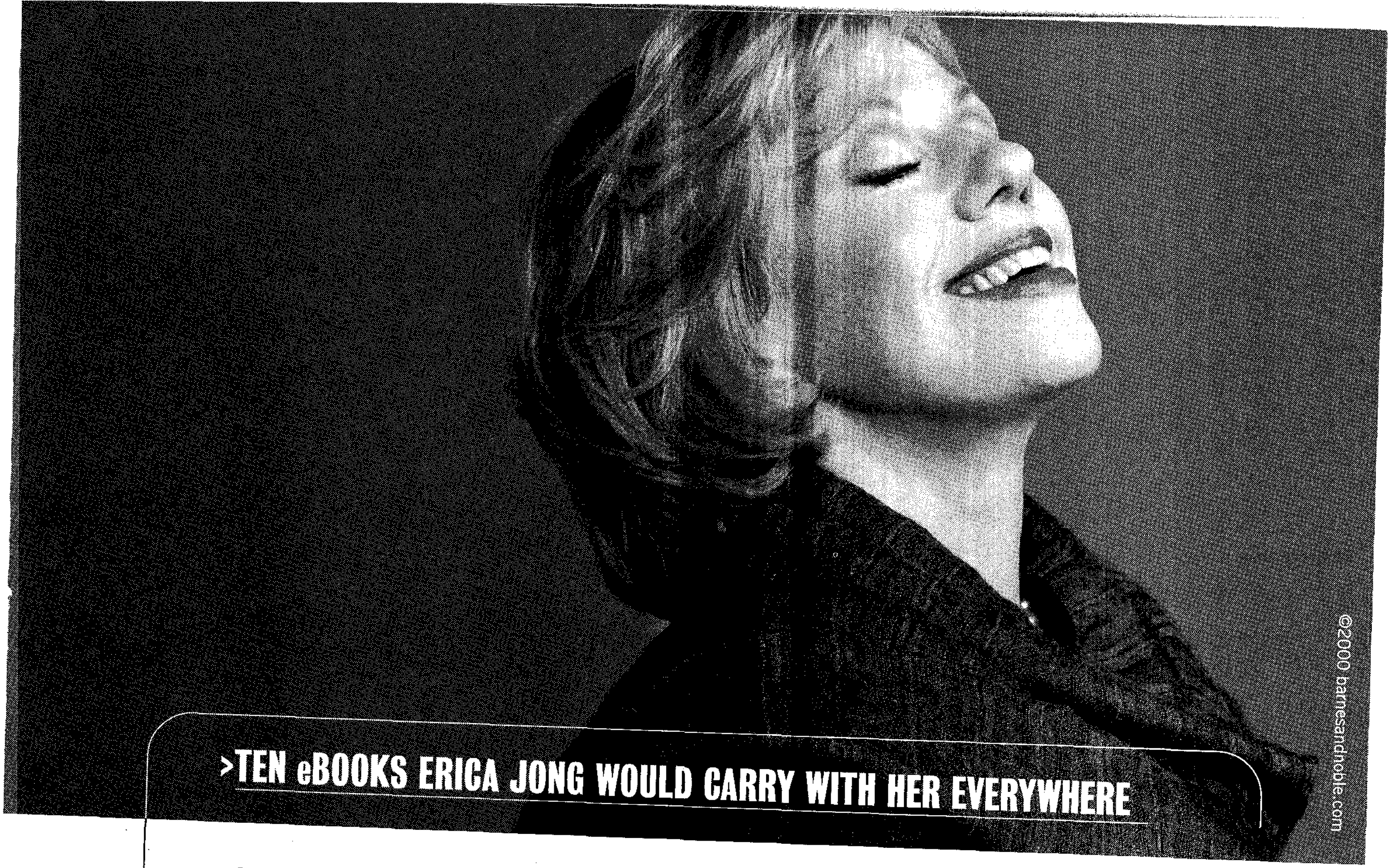
> In the tram, Dr. K. is suddenly convulsed by a violent aversion to Pick, because the latter has a small, *unpleasant hole in his nature* through which he sometimes creeps forth in his entirety, as Dr. K. now observes.

If this were put any more strongly, it would curdle into Guignol; when you are as easily nauseated by circumstance as Sebald and Kafka, you have to cultivate tact and taste. It is no accident that both men sidle inquisitively toward animal life, with its scurrying, subrational rites. I laughed out loud at Sebald's account of a dog "with a black mark like a patch over its left eye, that appeared like all stray dogs to run at an angle to the direction it was moving in," although I was more freaked by the "large black Newfoundland, its natural gentleness broken by ill-treatment, long confinement or even the crystal clarity of the autumn day." What is happening here? Why should a beautiful day reduce a dog to rage? How can anyone—man or beast—be kept in conditions so dank and dour that, in the end, even sunshine feels like an insult? "The Emigrants" knows all too well the cause of people's upheaval, but "Vertigo" likes to keep us guessing; we are shepherded through incidents that operate, as if masonically, on rules that we struggle to comprehend. Sebald and a friend enter a Viennese bar and find "a silent gathering, the shadow of the waitress threading among them, as if she were the bearer of secret messages between the several guests and the corpulent landlord." Even a photo booth pauses to "yield up" its strip of prints, as though withholding classified information. Having read the book two or three times, I still can't decide on the tone of these lurking events; they feel too perilous for a sacrament, yet too inconclusive to be a plot. What I do know is that, even though some of Sebald's sentences need to be solved as if you were cracking a case, the task of detection never sinks into a hardship. On the contrary, it's a pleasure. To the bookstore browser, Sebald must seem more daunting than any of his contemporaries; to his fans, he is an addiction, and, once buttonholed by his books, you have neither the wish nor the will to tear yourself away.

Sebald's "Vertigo" feels, in the end, consolingly close to Hitchcock's. The past yawns and stretches below this book, and, like the James Stewart character, Sebald, in his guise of timorous hero, seeks a strange cure for his ills by remolding what already exists—Kafka instead of Kim Novak, it is true, but you can't have everything. There is even a sense that giddiness—*Schwindelgefühle*, the inability to plot one's coördinates on the map of the world—may be not so much an affliction as a fruitful fit. Anyone who remembers the dislocated souls



"I just don't think a giant flaming blob of alien ectoplasm would say that."



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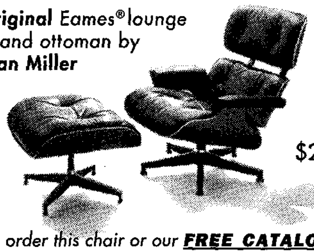

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who sauntered through the New German cinema of the nineteen-seventies—Bruno S., for example, the smiling, half-named idiot savant who played the leading man for Werner Herzog in "Stroszek" and "The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser," or the entire cast of Alpine villagers whom Herzog is said to have hypnotized for their performance in "Heart of Glass"—will recognize this peculiarly Germanic strain of tolerance. It goes back at least as far as Georg Büchner, and an American reader will probably be more aroused than anyone else by its insistence that what propels the romantic imagination is not longing but risk; if you want the mind to slip its moorings, you have to be the one to loosen the rope and cast off.

"I take refuge in prose," another of Sebald's acquaintances says, "as one might in a boat," and "Vertigo" is among the most marine of works—calm as a lake, and worryingly turbid below. Like the flat coastal county that he tramped through in "The Rings of Saturn," everything here is moist. A car: "Now and then some vehicle would crawl slowly along the gleaming black roads, the last of an amphibian species, retreating now to the deeper waters." A chapel: "In that walled cell I sat for a while. . . . The moist smell of lime became sea air; I could feel the spray on my forehead and the boards swaying beneath my feet." Even behind that forehead, an ache, allayed by aspirin, begins to ease, "like the darkness that drains from the sand as the water recedes after high tide." We are stuck fast inside the writer's brain, with its rich pickings of flotsam, and yet what is most endearing about Sebald is his startling lack of indulgence. He writes about himself at almost every turn, comparing notes with the dead and the forgotten, and yet he tells us next to nothing about himself; even more disarmingly, and most unmodishly, he seems not to be very interested in himself. He is a walking headache with a railroad ticket and a leaking memory, and that is all we know for sure. He once claimed, apparently, that what he would most like to have been is a ferry pilot on Lake Geneva. As the Charon of the overworld, W. G. Sebald should not be disappointed; his marvellous books do equally useful duty, ceaselessly bearing us toward the other shore. ♦

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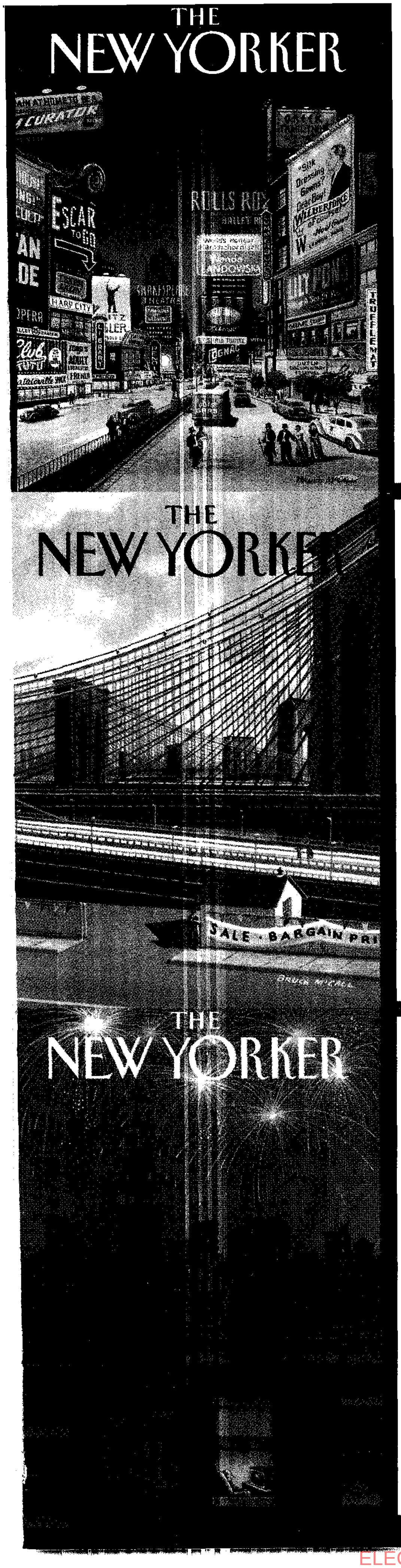

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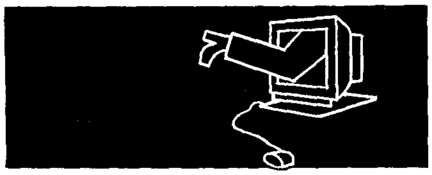

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Inside.com
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This eagerly awaited site promised to deliver insider media analysis with a knowing smile, and it does exactly that, with informative, sometimes gossipy reports from the film, music, TV, publishing, and on-line industries. The site is supported by subscribers, of course, and its success (or failure) with this model will be closely scrutinized, but there's plenty here for free browsing, as well. Of special note are the charts and graphs, the summaries of late-night talk shows, and the Power Indexes (which let subscribers rank influential figures in entertainment and the media).

The On-Line Books Page
digital.library.upenn.edu/books
For some, electronic literature means Stephen King's recent novella. But those in the know have been able to find electronic literature on the Net for years, thanks to free text projects like the digital library hosted by the University of Pennsylvania. The On-Line Books Page includes more than eleven thousand texts, from James Abbey's "California: A Trip Across the Plains, in the Spring of 1850" to Jim Zwick's edition of "History of the 19th Century in Political Cartoons." These alphabetical endpoints may sound dry, but the rest of the holdings couldn't be juicier: there's Balzac, Conrad, Dickens, Eliot, Flaubert, Gaskell, and so on.

Searchable Online Archive of Recipes
soar.berkeley.edu/recipes
While some of the commercial recipe databases have the advantage of glossy photos or celebrity endorsements—epicurious.com and marthastewart.com are standouts—SOAR trumps the competition when it comes to quantity. There are so many categories, ranging from general-interest foods to special-interest dishes (vegetarian, gluten-free, and more than sixty international cuisines), that you'll never go hungry. And you can even compare multiple recipes for the same dish: should your cheese babka sit in a cheesecloth-lined flowerpot or not?

Ed Donaldson Hardware Restorations
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Organ donors have nothing on old houses, whose parts are saved and re-sold to new homeowners desirous of a little historical flair. The Internet is the perfect medium for redistributing these parts—just ask Ed Donaldson, who has put the contents of his Adamstown, Pennsylvania, showroom on the Web. Donaldson has a large selection of hinges, latches, knobs, and more; whether you're looking for a cast-bronze Victorian cylinder entry-door lock or white porcelain sconces with blue linear trim, this is the place.

All Music Guide
www.allmusic.com
Have those Benny Goodman/Jack Teagarden records you loved so much as a child appeared on CD? When did Patsy Cline die? And what ever happened to Black Oak Arkansas? Fear not: the All Music Guide knows all. One of the best references in cyberspace, the Guide includes capsule biographies of roughly forty thousand artists and reviews of roughly a hundred and fifty thousand albums. Other on-line music resources tend to focus on specific genres, but All Music ranges from rock to pop to punk to jazz to hip-hop to soca. And, in case you're wondering, those Goodman/Teagarden records are available on CD.

Rotten Tomatoes
www.rottentomatoes.com
Some movie buffs may prefer on-line encyclopedias such as the Internet Movie Database (www.imdb.com) and the All Movie Guide (www.allmovie.com), but few sites capture the excitement of Hollywood as well as Rotten Tomatoes. Weeks before a film appears in theatres, Rotten Tomatoes begins to agglomerate reviews from newspapers, magazines, and Web sites. The reviews are labelled with one of two Tomatoes icons (positive appraisals are fresh and red, pans are splattered and ostensibly rotten), and linked to a common page.

Robot Wisdom
www.robotwisdom.com
For readers, the Internet is an embarrassment of riches, with thousands of pages of new text to sift through daily. Thank goodness, then, for "weblogs," sites that scour the Web for interesting prose and data. What elevates Robot Wisdom above other weblogs is the catholicity of its creator, Jorn Barger, who has a healthy appetite for everything from literature to science. The result is a world defined by Barger's curiosity, in which an article about a grand plan to film all nineteen Beckett plays sits comfortably alongside a report on post-Chernobyl cleanup efforts.

—*Ben Greenman*

THE ART WORLD

THE TATE TRIP

Modernism revised on the Thames.

BY PETER SCHJELDAHL

When the crisp young customs officer at Heathrow asked the nature of my business in London, I said I would be writing about the new Tate Modern for this magazine. He said, "Oh, cool!" Great Britain today is not your father's sceptered isle. Coolness—the reckless assumption of mystic mojo—looms often in the attitudes and even the semi-official locutions of a country that is testing the potential of American, what-the-hell dash. How else to explain London's election of Ken Livingstone—a sort of Trotsky Ventura—as mayor? Even people who support the earnestly peppy Tony Blair seem to enjoy casting him as a flustered square. Suddenly, you can't make sense of much in England without seeking the aesthetic element. Museums, accordingly, have become hot spots of spiritual fashion. The Tate Modern, which is housed in a heroically ugly former power plant across the Thames from St. Paul's, and is accessible via a delicate footbridge designed by Norman Foster, is, as one typically giddy newspaper called it, the "Cathedral of Cool." The place has all but turned congenitally philistine Fleet Street into a nest of quaking aesthetes, by the way. Factor in the social triumph of a gallery scene that teems with Y.B.A.s (Young British Artists), and England can seem as fulsomely gone on art as it was in past centuries on the Royal Navy—with the Tate's director, Sir (at times, "Saint") Nicholas Serota, as a lanky Lord Nelson.

I am of two minds about the museum—thrilled and dismayed. First, the thrill. It's amazing to visit the institutional heart of a culture that has found, through art, the manner and the means for an elegant and philosophically keen global power play. Stand in the hundred-and-fifteen-foot-high Turbine Hall, which nonchalantly throws away half the building's immense cubic space, and meditate on the significance of it all. You will have descended a vast ramp from the high-windowed entrance. That ramp, which has been preserved by the renovation's Swiss architects, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, who are wizards at doing a lot with little or nothing, is instantly a talismanic twenty-first-century site. You may intuit as much when, as you reach level ground, you turn and behold people flowing after you down the great human spillway—the world's masses entering into their birthright of hip cultivation. Note that the slope reverses the steep marble stairs of traditional museums, which one mounts strenuously to Higher Things. One detects the fulfillment of a classic remark by the art critic Christopher Knight: "In a democracy, anybody can be an élitist." If you also feel a mite dwarfed and interchangeable, that's part of the deal. Meanwhile, the admission price is right—free, thanks to funds from a national lottery (wealth squandered by hope, redeemed for aspiration).

Architecturally, the building's initial pledge is kept on the three exhibition floors. Two of them display the Tate's spotty holdings of art from 1900 to the present, which are supplemented, for the time being, by many loans. Included is a choice selection of British art of the period; the rest keeps company with the Hogarths, Blakes, and Turners at Tate Britain, in the museum's old Millbank building, across the river. In relation to Bankside's Duomo, cozy Millbank suggests a Little Church-in-the-Heather. The Tate Modern's other exhibition floor, which is reserved for temporary shows, features a nineteen-nineties-style array of installation works. Thick-walled rooms, painted tender off-whites, are graceful, frequently intimate, and sometimes majestic. Everyone comes away

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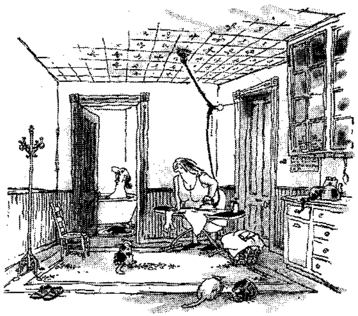

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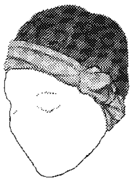

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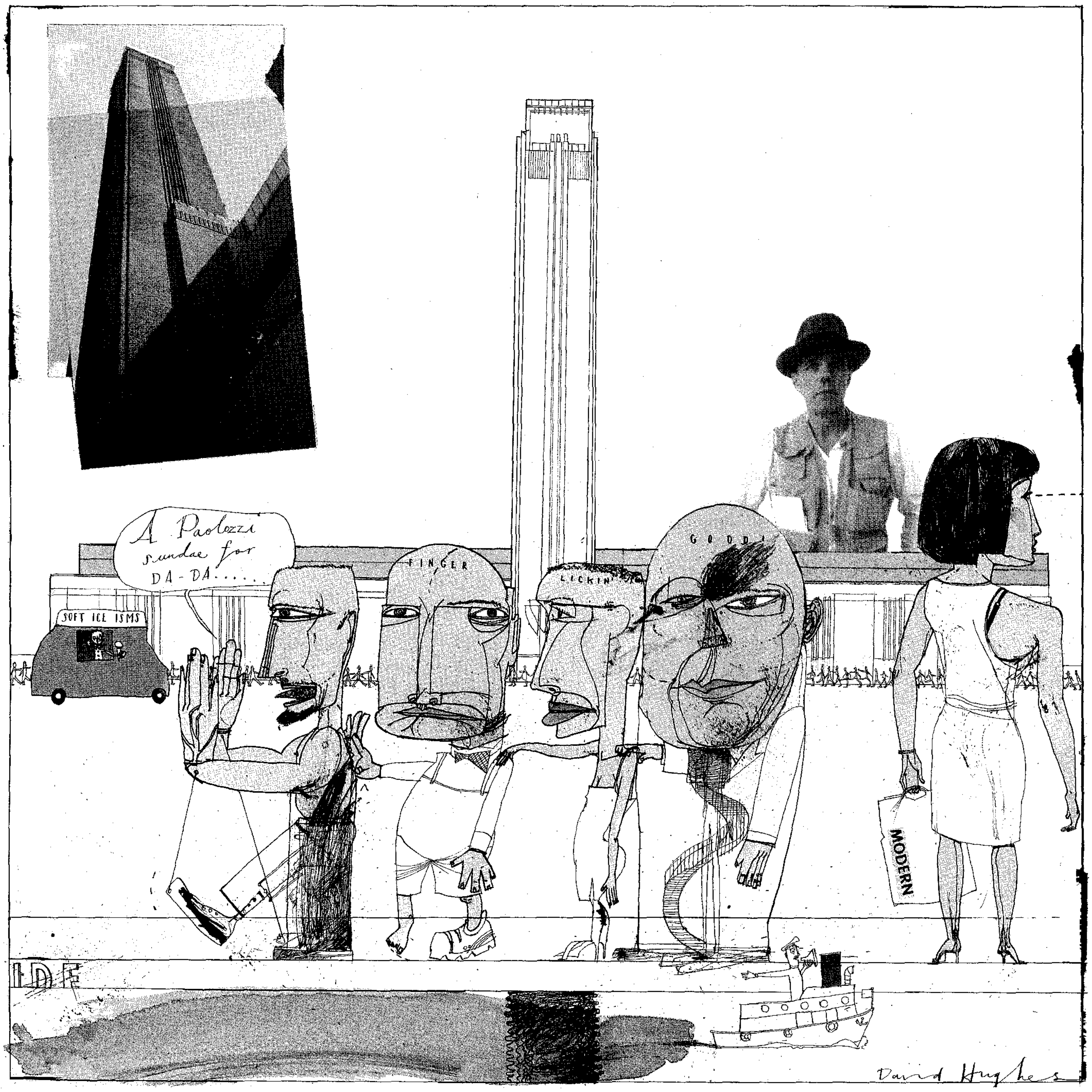

The new Tate Modern has been dubbed the "Cathedral of Cool" for its soaring spaces and goal of bringing hipness to the masses.

mentioning the high-ceilinged space that contains colossal sculptural pieces by Joseph Beuys, who seems to have been born to satisfy the new Tate's voracious needs. Passing views of the Thames and, vertiginously, of the Turbine Hall provide visual refreshment; for complaining legs there are sit-down lounges, laid out with relevant reading matter. One feels quite the honored guest—while perhaps never really shaking a sense of being subjected to a successful experiment in crowd management. In this, the Tate Modern does not feel as utterly different as it should from London's other Ozymandian new destination: the Millennium Dome. A structurally impressive, programmatically gruesome unamusement park, the educationally themed Dome achieves an awesome blend of the tacky and the patronizingly high-minded—a pratfall of taste that makes the Disney parks seem like the Villa d'Este.

Now the dismay. The hanging of the Tate Modern's augmented collections is a nightmare of over-curating and is all the more oppressive for being exceedingly tasteful, intelligent, and inventive. We have been forewarned of a growing museological trend toward interpretive hard sell by the Museum of Modern Art's current, relatively understated "MOMA2000" parade of thematized mini-shows. The trend's rationale, which sounds good, rejects yesteryear's chronological chain gang of styles in favor of presentations that focus on timeless subjects and historical meanings. Serota and his crew have taken the idea straight from novelty into overripe decadence, with scores of didactic

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groupings, each accompanied (as is nearly every art work) by a wall-label mini-essay—the museum as twittering machine. Thus: "Naked and Nude," "The Myth of the Primitive," "Subversive Objects," "The Figure as History," and so on. Each room is a Procrustean bed that lops off the odd arm or leg of the art's complexity to fit a common cause. The treatment extends to historical movements whose integrity resists such editing. Lest you be distracted by the intense formality of Cubism, you are alerted to its true pith: "Modern Life." Surrealism? "Inner Worlds." Abstract Expressionism? "Nature Into Action." Minimalism? "The Perceiving Body," if you please—or even particularly understand. Only certain rooms that are devoted to single artists—among them Mark Rothko, Andy Warhol, Bridget Riley, and Tony Cragg—provide shelter from the pedagogical blitz; I felt almost physically emancipated whenever I entered one. At work, over all, is an apparent fever of curatorial urges to usurp the independent prerogatives of artists, critics, and ordinary viewers, reducing art to glorified illustration, criticism to ineffectual demurral, and viewership to studenthood.

It may be argued that the new Tate's principle of intellectual guidance affords mass audiences a capital education in how to look at modern art, but this begs the question of where in London the enlightened can then go to exercise their learning. In effect, the museum supplies a Lewis Carrollish map on a one-to-one scale with the terrain that it describes—and obliterates. One can hardly talk about the art itself, only about the curators' talk about the art. Rather than abandoning oneself to the works on display, one is driven to winkling out the calculation that has put them where they are. Thus one discerns a smart checklist of motives for the domineering objects in the Turbine Hall: a wonderful bronze spider and three silly steel towers by that angel of unevenness Louise Bourgeois—French, American, female, elderly, formerly underrated. If Bourgeois herself registers rather weakly, that's not the point: the strength of the institution, which has its reasons, is affirmed. Institutional envy of fashionable artists turns truculent in the anti-hedonistic, anti-commercial bias of "Between Cinema and a Hard Place," a show of installations that is almost bereft of Y.B.A.s. Don't anticipate gratuitous beauty, humor, and zest in the Tate Modern's contemporary offerings. Those are insufficiently grave criteria for a cathedral that identifies coolness with dignified power.

But you know what? The museum's overweening personality is probably a good thing for the long-range dynamism of British art culture, which hereby acquires a battleship-size fixed target for substantive controversy. While the Tate Modern was being built, the artistically flimsy Y.B.A. scene, dominated by the collector Charles Saatchi's "Sensation" cohort, enjoyed a far too easy ride as the nation's aesthetic pace-setter. It sometimes seemed that the insouciant cheekiness of, for example, Damien Hirst's high-tech shock tactics and Sarah Lucas's bad-girl sex jokes rendered questions of worth cluelessly boring. But everybody is on his mettle now. At Saatchi's space, on Boundary Road, a show of the usual suspects entitled "Ant Noises" ("Sensation" anagrammed) confirms one indubitable star: Jenny Saville, whose sublimely sensate big canvases tackle modern English painting's signature subject—unlovely flesh. The show is otherwise remarkably lame. Hirst weighs in with a rare major failure: a gigantic painted bronze sculpture of a partly flayed "Visible Man" doll, a piece so indifferently crafted that it repels interest. He, or Lucas or somebody, will have to do a great deal better than that to justify Britain's art euphoria, which at present has the air of a brilliant advertising campaign for a product that is still under design. ♦

From a letter to parents in the Trinidad (Calif.) Union School District.

As you may know, Trinidad School has been attempting to locate the whereabouts of a time capsule that was allegedly buried by a prior class. This morning, at 11:40 A.M., a volunteer with a metal detector uncovered a hand grenade, located in the side lawn just outside of the principal's office.

Ah, those pranksters from '44.

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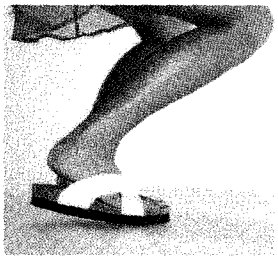

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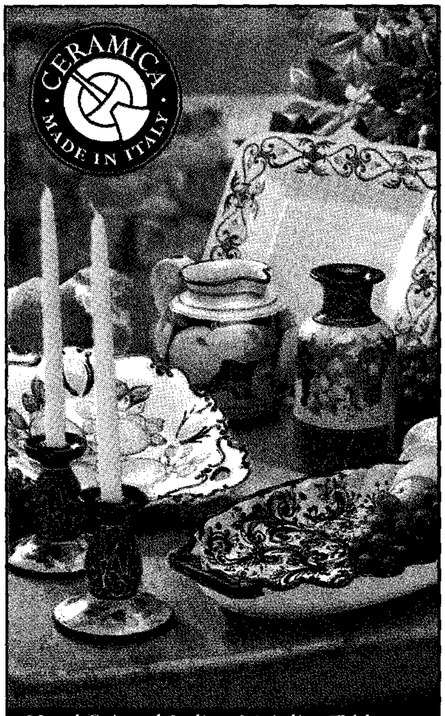

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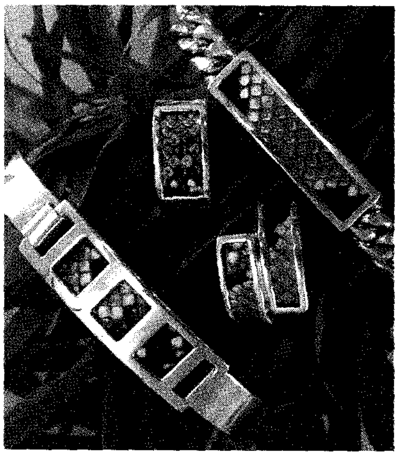

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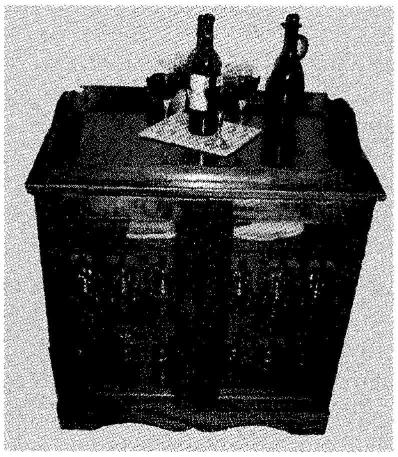

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

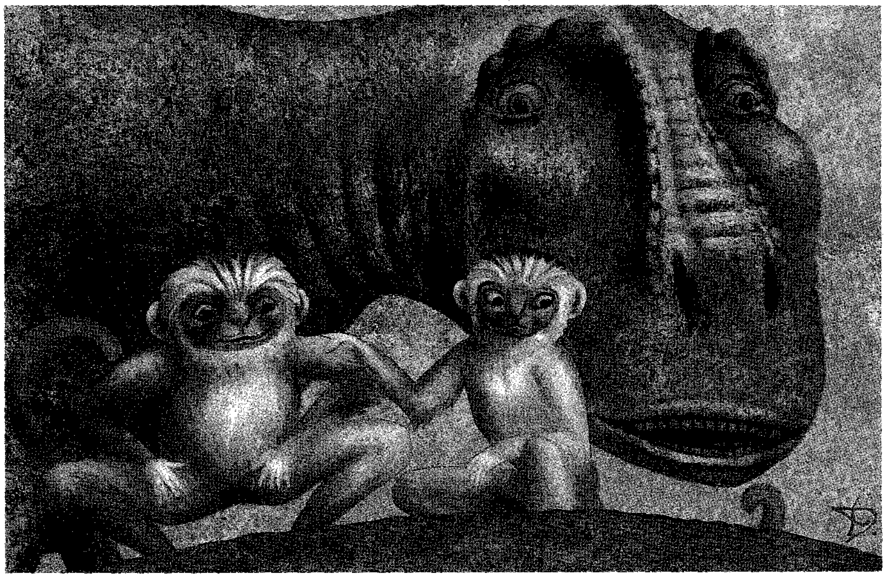
HERD MENTALITY

Of dinosaurs and moviemakers.

BY DAVID DENBY

In "Dinosaur," Disney's hundred-and-thirty-million-dollar animated feature, such creatures as the brachiosaur and the styracosaur complain about their feet, struggle to work out personality problems, and wonder aloud if they are meant to survive as a species. Whatever else it is, "Dinosaur" is a talking-animal picture. The hero, an iguanodon named Aladar (the voice of D. B. Sweeney), is orphaned at birth and gets raised by lemurs. (Ossie Davis can be heard growling as their eldest member.) After a devastating meteor shower, Aladar and a few of the monkeys fall in with a mixed group of herbivores heading for their nesting ground (California, I think). Along the way, they are threatened by a pair of fearsome carnotaurs, who have more teeth than William F. Buckley. "Dinosaur," which is about family and survival, was designed for little children, and my problem with the picture is that it literalizes the art of animation out of existence. The animators took genuine footage of California, Jordan, and Australia, and then placed computer-generated images of the beasts lumbering or jumping in the foreground of the shots. The detail in the computer images can be wonderful—say, the fineness of the hair on the lemurs' heads, or the way the dinosaurs' cheeks shake when they bellow. But the movie is often "visual" in a very commonplace style. The panoramic views of actual deserts, plains, and valleys limit the filmmakers' imagination of the fantastic: the action is earthbound and reality-based (except for those historically misplaced lemurs), and I found myself missing the violent freedom of Tarzan surfing the upper branches of the forest and the exuberant airborne absurdities of "Aladdin." This movie also dispenses with the great comic strength of Disney animation—metaphor, the promise that any object can become another object. The realism of "Dinosaur" ends the long run of teacup ballets and seashell fantasias. No one plays Liszt—or even Elton John—on the armored plates of the ankylosaur. More sombre matters are at hand.

Aladar, who's a good dinosaur and takes care of the others, gets into a tussle with the head of the herbivores, Kron (Samuel E. Wright), who thinks that the weaker members of the group should be left behind to die. Poor, gloomy Kron has a saurian death wish. But Aladar triumphs, and his compassion turns the movie into an anti-Darwinian fable: togetherness and love will allow the Cretaceous to flourish. At the climax, the entire herd turns on an evil carnotaur and bravely roars him into retreating. A squadron of striking cafeteria workers couldn't have done any better. It's lucky the House Un-American Activities Committee isn't around anymore to smoke out subversive meanings in our movies, for, if I'm not mistaken, "Dinosaur" offers the strongest argument for collectivism to appear in American films since "Mission to Moscow."



Disney's "Dinosaur" becomes an anti-Darwinian fable.

BLAIR DRAWSON

Those who, like me, have never seen Ethan Stiefel dance in the flesh may be willing to put up with "Center Stage." We get to see quite a lot of the American Ballet Theatre star in this bizarrely infantile movie—most notably in a sequence devoted to Balanchine's "Stars and Stripes," in which Stiefel manages to inject military stiffnesss into movements of great speed, a stuttered punctuation that becomes a devastating form of wit. Slender and blond, with mild blue eyes and a slightly foreign timbre to his voice (hard to say why: he's an American country boy), Stiefel plays Cooper Nielsen, a superstar who lords it over the young dancers of the fictional American Ballet Academy—the training institution that feeds a few of its kids every year into the Academy's parent company, a seeming amalgam of A.B.T. and New York City Ballet. As an actor, Stiefel is asked to do little more than look cocksure and smile wolfishly at the trembling student ballerinas, but we get a bit more of him in the dance sections of the movie. He throws himself around with abandon in a slumming visit to a jazz-dance studio, and he's scintillating in a few scenes from Sir Kenneth MacMillan's "Romeo and Juliet." All in all, Stiefel is about the only thing in the movie that doesn't make one cringe.

"Center Stage" suggests both "Fame" and a thirties backstage movie musical—only this is a thirties musical without good jokes. The screenplay, credited to Carol Heikkinen, might have been fine-tuned by a guidance counsellor. As the young dancers compete for places in the big company, there's a great deal of earnest stuff about dating anxiety and parental pressure and bulimia, and we learn that talent without "heart" is a bad thing. The movie follows the ups and downs of six young dancers, all of whom, except for two who willingly withdraw from the fray, manage to get exactly what they want. "Center Stage" may be full of brave talk about the difficulties of becoming a dancer, but in the end it offers the purest candy of wish fulfillment, right down to the shameless last-minute substitution of a sarcastic but secretly ambitious African-American dancer, Eva (Zoë Saldana), for one of the dancers who drops out. Eva performs in a complicated ballet, before a packed house, without ever having rehearsed her role. There's heart for you. Her performance, however, is the product not of courage but of decades of cynically bad screenwriting. "Center Stage" stomps on the intelligence of any possible audience that might be drawn to the movie's subject.

The distinguished British theatre director Nicholas Hytner started out very well in movies with "The Madness of King George," but, whether through miscalculation, desperation, or contempt, he has pitched himself downward into ever more commonplace American material—from "The Crucible," an ersatz profound drama, to the sitcommy "The Object of My Affection," and from that to this high-school view of the dance world. It's a mortifying comment on the alleged glories of Anglo-American theatrical know-how that so many talented people—including the choreographer, Susan Stroman, the producer, Laurence Mark, the cinematographer, Geoffrey Simpson, and the editor, Tariq Anwar—wound up devoting their efforts to a story shaped like a senior-prom movie. Who's to blame? Is it Amy Pascal, the Columbia executive who greenlighted the production and then tried to cover her bets? But why hire the world's best talent if you are determined to downgrade the conception of the project? Surely the banality of this movie was calculated from the beginning.

It turns out that the center of the picture is not Stiefel's Cooper Nielsen but Jody Sawyer (Amanda Schull), a young sweetiekins, full of doubts about her appearance, who seems to have been lifted from the pages of *Seventeen*. As it happens, Schull gives off a sexual glow when she dances, and "Center Stage" might have worked much better if something serious had been made of the transformation, on the dance floor, of an ordinary pretty girl into an icon. The movie blindly ignores what's inherent in the subject of young dancers—the transcendence of what's messy in one's life into the formalized tensions of dance. The camera work and editing treat the dancers well, and some of the rehearsal scenes are fine—urgent and detailed—but "Center Stage" asks us to indulge Jody's adolescent point of view far too much. Ethan Stiefel, for all his greatness when he dances, is seen largely through her eyes, as nothing but a sexy egotist. (Virtually the same thing was done to Baryshnikov twenty-three years ago, in "The Turning Point.") "Center Stage" is way off center. It celebrates supreme talent by domesticating it and then bringing it to the bar of a high-schoolish morality. The dancer Sascha Radetsky, from A.B.T.'s corps, is cast as a lesser talent but a good fellow who vies with Cooper for Jody's affection, and Jody matures when she tells the star off and realizes that the sweet guy who respects her is, in fact, the only guy for her. "Center Stage" is full of appropriate little lessons about life and love.

No one could get steamed about another new movie aimed at teens, "Road Trip," since that picture is just a series of raffish sex jokes pinned to a sagging clothesline of plot—standard summer stuff, with Viagra gags and a skinny nerd with big ears who gets vamped by a sexually overpowering fat lady. But "Center Stage" is a different story. A semi-fiasco like this could stifle the possibilities of a dance revival in movies for years. The many talented people involved in it may have been afraid of outclassing the audience, but they wound up outsmarting themselves. ♦

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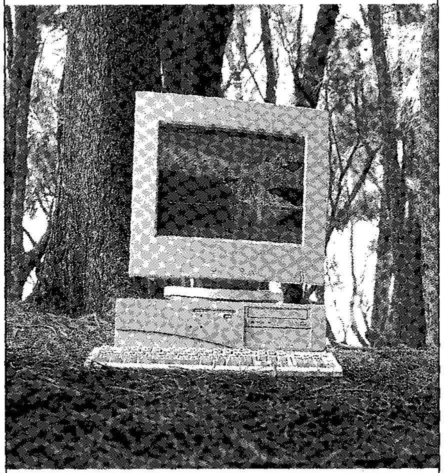

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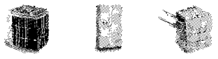

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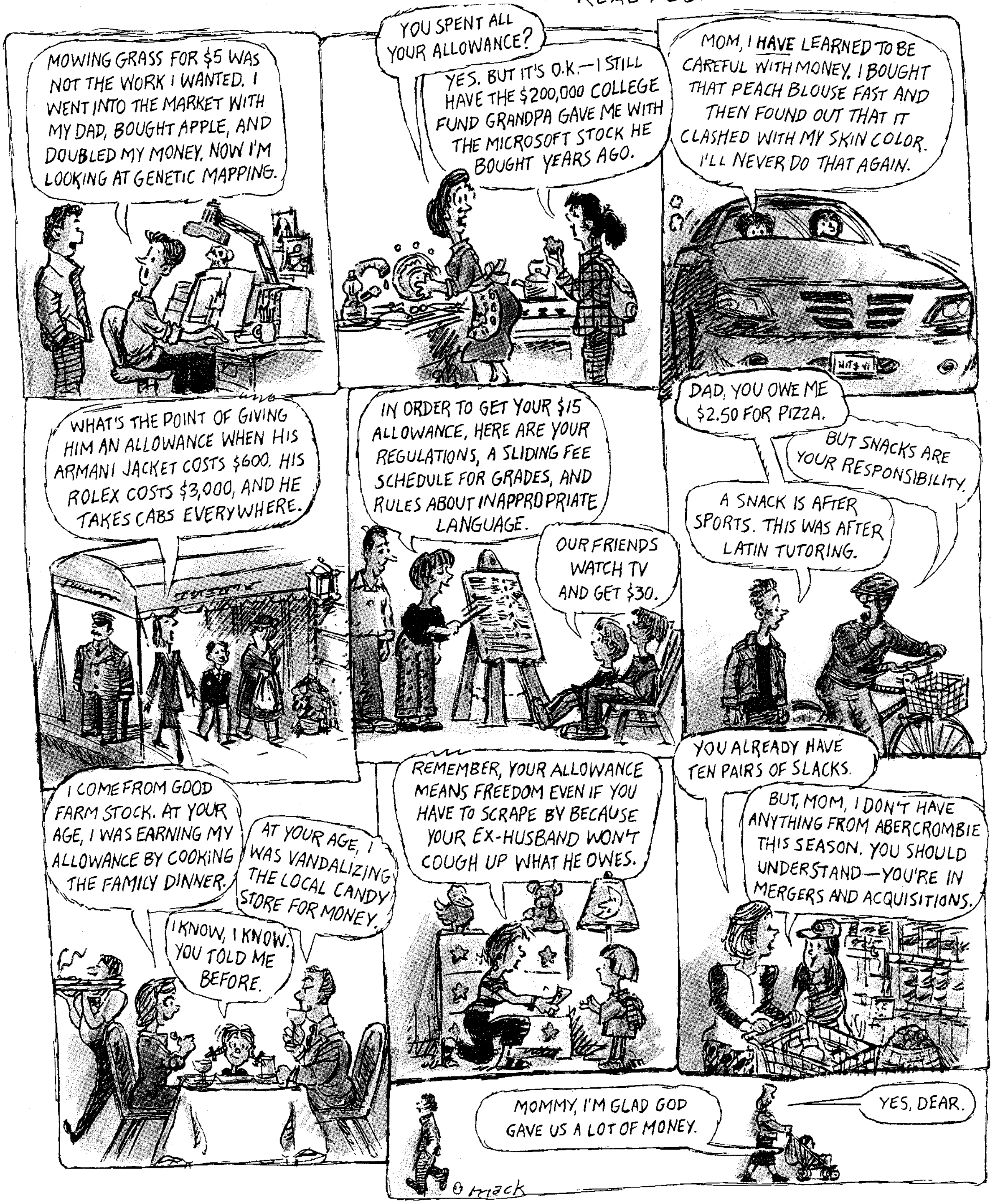
THE BACK PAGE BY STAN MACK

MAKING ALLOWANCE

REAL PEOPLE, REAL VOICES


MOWING GRASS FOR $5 WAS NOT THE WORK I WANTED. I WENT INTO THE MARKET WITH MY DAD, BOUGHT APPLE, AND DOUBLED MY MONEY. NOW I'M LOOKING AT GENETIC MAPPING.
YOU SPENT ALL YOUR ALLOWANCE?
YES. BUT IT'S O.K.—I STILL HAVE THE $200,000 COLLEGE FUND GRANDPA GAVE ME WITH THE MICROSOFT STOCK HE BOUGHT YEARS AGO.
MOM, I HAVE LEARNED TO BE CAREFUL WITH MONEY. I BOUGHT THAT PEACH BLOUSE FAST AND THEN FOUND OUT THAT IT CLASHED WITH MY SKIN COLOR. I'LL NEVER DO THAT AGAIN.
WHAT'S THE POINT OF GIVING HIM AN ALLOWANCE WHEN HIS ARMANI JACKET COSTS $600, HIS ROLEX COSTS $3,000, AND HE TAKES CABS EVERYWHERE.
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OUR FRIENDS WATCH TV AND GET $30.
DAD, YOU OWE ME $2.50 FOR PIZZA.
BUT SNACKS ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.
A SNACK IS AFTER SPORTS. THIS WAS AFTER LATIN TUTORING.
I COME FROM GOOD FARM STOCK. AT YOUR AGE, I WAS EARNING MY ALLOWANCE BY COOKING THE FAMILY DINNER.
AT YOUR AGE, I WAS VANDALIZING THE LOCAL CANDY STORE FOR MONEY.
I KNOW, I KNOW. YOU TOLD ME BEFORE.
REMEMBER, YOUR ALLOWANCE MEANS FREEDOM EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO SCRAPE BY BECAUSE YOUR EX-HUSBAND WON'T COUGH UP WHAT HE OWES.
YOU ALREADY HAVE TEN PAIRS OF SLACKS.
BUT, MOM, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING FROM ABERCROMBIE THIS SEASON. YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND—YOU'RE IN MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS.
MOMMY, I'M GLAD GOD GAVE US A LOT OF MONEY.
YES, DEAR.
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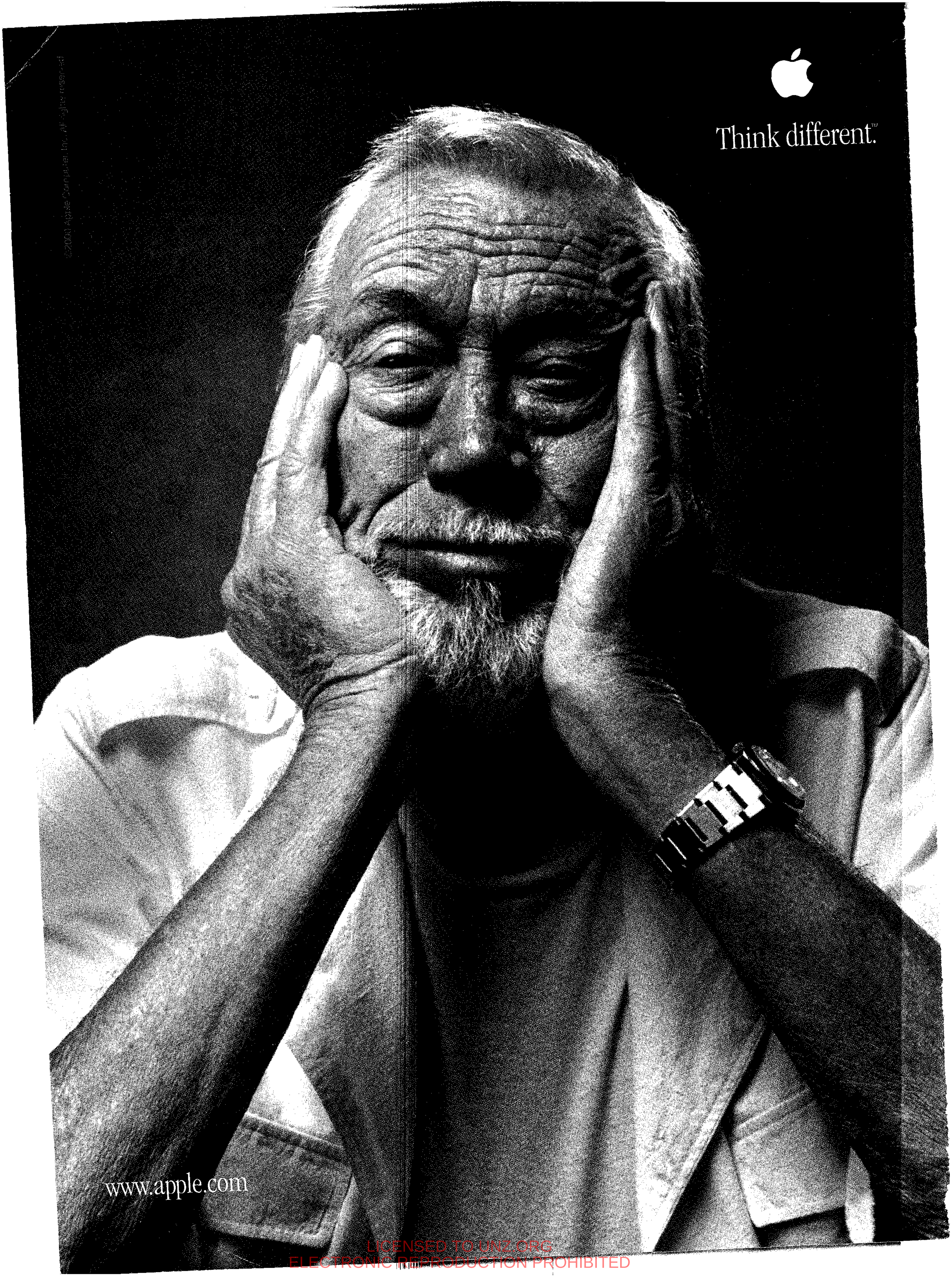
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